




3 1761 11893699 6

CA20N  
HO 5  
-76B73

GOVT







Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2024 with funding from  
University of Toronto

<https://archive.org/details/31761118936996>





42 φN Hφ 5

- 76B73

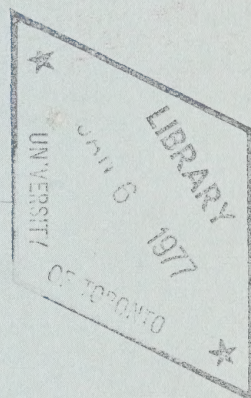
# Business Improvement Areas

Proceedings of a  
workshop on Downtown  
Improvements: Ways  
and Means (Toronto,  
June 29, 1976)

(3)

D

Government  
Publications



Ontario

Ministry of  
Housing





CAZ 6N H4 5

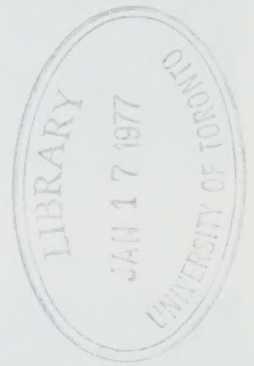
-76B73

Government  
Publications

# Business Improvement Areas

Proceedings of a  
workshop on Downtown  
Improvements: Ways  
and Means (Toronto,  
June 29, 1976)

Canadian Association of Housing and  
Renewal Officials with the co-operation of  
the Community Renewal Branch,  
Ontario Ministry of Housing



Any statements or opinions expressed  
herein are those of the writers or of  
persons quoted and, unless otherwise  
noted, are not necessarily endorsed by  
the Ministry of Housing or by the  
Government of Ontario.

**Copies available from:**  
Ontario Government Bookstore  
880 Bay St.  
Toronto, Ont. M7A 1N8  
Price: \$0.00 payable in advance  
to the Treasurer of Ontario

edited by  
**H. A. Hossé and  
G. A. Przybyłowski**



Ontario

Ministry of  
Housing

Hon. John R. Rhodes, minister  
Donald A. Crosbie, deputy minister

\$ 2.00

MAIN STREET, ONTARIO  
Then . . .



. . . and now





## CONTENTS

### PREFACE

1. THE WORKSHOP AS AN INFORMATION SOURCE AND CATALYST (G. A. Przybylowski) . . . . .	3
2. HOW TO APPROACH THE PROBLEM: COMMENTS ON SELECTED CONCERNS	
2.1. The Business Community and The Municipality (S. R. Price) . . . . .	9
2.2. Complacency versus Change (F. Zimmer) . . . . .	15
2.3. Need for A Commitment (N. McLellan) . . . . .	21
2.4. St. Thomas: An Example of Joint Action (M. W. Neal) . . . . .	25
3. HOW TO INITIATE A BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA	
3.1. Selected Explanatory Comments on B.I.A. Legislation (H. Billington) . . . . .	35
3.2. Section 361 of The Municipal Act . . . . .	41
4. HOW TO MANAGE A BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA	
4.1. Some Organizational Suggestions (H. Boyd) . . . . .	47
4.2. The Role of A Board Member (P. McFadden) . . . . .	63
5. HOW TO MARKET A BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA	
5.1. Cooperative Promotion (R. I. Pollock) . . . . .	69
5.2. Underlying Marketing Principles (J. F. Harris) . . . . .	73
5.3. Practical Examples from "Old Cabbagetown" (B. Davis) . . . . .	81





6.	HOW TO DEVELOP A CONCEPT PLAN FOR A BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA: GENERAL GUIDELINES	
6.1.	Pragmatic and Action-oriented Planning (D. Baxter)	87
6.2.	Market Impact and Feasibility Studies (R. W. McCabe)	99
6.3.	A Practical Guide to Preparing A Plan and Program (R. Jenkins)	117
7.	HOW TO DEAL WITH PARKING IN A BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA: IDEAS AND EXAMPLES (T. Silberberg & D. Garrett)	127
8.	HOW TO BEAUTIFY A BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA: SELECTED EXAMPLES	
8.1.	Beautifying City Streets (J. Kimmel)	139
8.2.	The "Norwich Plan" in Niagara Falls (B. Hutcheon)	143
8.3.	"Project Pride"--Financing and Building Facades (R. Boychuk)	147
9.	ST. CATHARINES' CITY CORE: CASE HISTORY OF A BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA (H. Nash)	155
10.	LUNCHEON ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE JOHN R. RHODES, MINISTER OF HOUSING, TO THE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA WORKSHOP, HOTEL TORONTO, TUESDAY, JUNE 29, 1976	165





## **PREFACE**

As noted in Section 1, it was the desire of the Workshop's Steering Committee and the expressed wish of the participants to have the proceedings made available in the form of a publication. The various contributions made by the speakers and resource persons of the Workshop reflect aspects of common concerns and problems and the need for the attainment of a coordinated effort by businessmen and municipal authorities with respect to business area improvements.

The proceedings of the Workshop contained in this publication attempt to provide a basic understanding and appreciation of the underlying conceptual goals of the provincial legislation pertaining to Business Improvement Areas (B.I.A.) as set out in Section 361 of The Municipal Act. In order to achieve some measure of terminological consistency and concise cohesiveness as well as to eliminate redundancy, duplication and certain irrelevancies, the editor has taken the liberty of making minor modifications and changes in the written submissions of the participating speakers. However, in all cases, a conscientious attempt has been made to retain the flavour and tone of the speakers' contributions together, obviously, with the factual data and personal opinions expressed.

It should be noted, and it is explicitly emphasized, that the opinions, views and approaches to problems and their possible solutions advanced in this publication are the exclusive opinions, views, approaches and interpretations of the individual speakers. The content of the papers presented here is the sole responsibility of their individual authors. Eventual inquiries and/or comments regarding any one or any combination of the topics covered should, therefore, be directed to their respective authors, whose

names, occupations, and locations are listed immediately below the topical headings.

Nothing contained in this publication should be construed as representing policy of the Ontario Government.

It is hoped that this publication, together with the Workshop itself and the efforts and endeavours of the speakers and authors, will assist all those who are concerned with improvements of the "downtown" or other specific business areas in their communities. It represents an attempt to promote a better understanding of ways in which the B.I.A. legislation may be used in paving the way for a continuing cooperation and coordination of effort between businessmen and municipalities.

H. A. Hossé  
G. A. Przybylowski,  
Editors.



# 1

THE WORKSHOP AS  
AN INFORMATION SOURCE  
AND CATALYST





## **1. The Workshop as Information Source and Catalyst**

G. A. Przybylowski,  
Community Renewal Branch,  
Ministry of Housing.

In December 1969, enabling legislation for "Business Improvement Areas" was incorporated under Section 361 of The Municipal Act. Since then, a few municipalities and their local businessmen have used these legislative provisions to undertake improvement and promotional programs in their downtown and other retail shopping districts.

Interest in the improvement of downtown and other retail areas has increased in recent years. Some of the reasons for this upsurge are outlined in a Provincial study, "Revitalizing Ontario's Downtowns" (1975):

Unrestrained, new commercial development gravitates towards the periphery of an urban centre because of the lower costs and lower risks as compared to the downtown. The amenities provided in suburban shopping centres can readily provide greater attraction than an outdated downtown, and in many cities symptoms of the resulting problems are clearly evident. If this trend continues, the result will be a fallout in investment, in maintenance and expansion, and decay not only in commercial districts but in nearby residential areas as well. A decline in the downtown will lead to the loss of the city's focal point and to a reduction in the diversity of services and communication normally provided there. In particular, the poor and the elderly who typically live near the core will suffer the most.

While there are some encouraging examples of strong local governments taking steps to preserve the downtown, many municipalities lack the power, the will or the resources to deal with the problems of their downtowns.

It is precisely due to this search for resources and information that the idea of convening a workshop on "Business Improvements Areas" (B.I.A.) was conceived. Municipal officials and local businessmen from several communities requested the assistance of the Ministry of Housing in arranging a one day seminar to provide information on the various aspects of establishing, developing and operating a "Business Improvement Area" as a means for downtown improvement. Joint sponsorship of such a workshop was arranged between the Canadian Association of Housing and Renewal Officials and the Community Renewal Branch of the Ministry of Housing.

A Steering Committee was subsequently formed to oversee the design and management of this workshop. Representation was solicited from a cross-section of organizations and levels of government involved with the promotion of business area improvement. The Committee members included:

Don Baxter, Planner, City of Oshawa,  
Harry Billington, Development Officer, City of Toronto,  
Hugh Boyd, Executive Director, City Core Association,  
City of St. Catharines,  
George Cook, Deputy Commissioner of Development,  
City of Toronto  
Robert Pollock, Industrial Development Officer,  
Ministry of Industry and Tourism,  
George Przybylowski, Liaison Officer, Ministry of Housing,  
and

William Vigars, General Manager, Welland Chamber of Commerce.  
It was through Mr. Billington's approach to the Ministry of Housing that initial agreement to undertake this workshop was reached.

The workshop was designed to offer participants the opportunity to attend individual work sessions which would treat all of the relevant subjects concerning "Business Improvement Areas":

- How to initiate a B.I.A.,
- How to manage a B.I.A.,

- How to develop a marketing and promotional program,
- How to develop a concept plan for improvement.

It was also decided to provide topical sessions on two common and related subjects: parking and examples of beautification projects and techniques.

To give most workshop participants an opportunity to understand a B.I.A. and its operation, one special session was arranged to review three different and distinct examples: Bloor West Village (a retail shopping district in the City of Toronto); City Core Association of St. Catharines (a B.I.A. in a medium-sized community); and St. Thomas Downtown Association (a B.I.A. in a smaller urban community).

Altogether, there were seven subjects to be covered. Therefore it became apparent that no single delegate could physically attend all seven work sessions. To resolve this problem, the Steering Committee embarked upon a promotional program to encourage the attendance of groups and agreed to publish the speakers' notes in a single volume which could be distributed to all the delegates shortly after the workshop. The attendance of groups would mean that each of the delegates could attend the sessions of his choice and specific interest with an opportunity to coordinate group schedules in such a way to cover all, or most, of the work sessions.

Some 450 delegates attended the workshop on June 29th; they represented 125 municipalities. These participants included planners, businessmen, municipal administrators and councillors, members of Chambers of Commerce, and interested professionals.

While the workshop's function was basically to disseminate information and practical experience regarding the B.I.A., it also acted as a catalyst for future activities of interested groups and/or municipalities desiring and/or planning improvement of their downtown and other business areas. However, nothing contained in the following proceedings of the Workshop should be construed as representing policy of the Government.



#### TRUCK TRAFFIC IN THE CORE

- Is it necessary? Can it be rerouted?
- "Main Street" is for the shopper



#### GOING OUT OF BUSINESS

- Loss of confidence in the downtown area
- Is retail dying in the core?



# 2

**HOW TO APPROACH THE  
PROBLEM: COMMENTS ON  
SELECTED CONCERNS**





## 2.1. The Business Community and The Municipality

S. R. Price,  
City Manager,  
City of Niagara Falls.

To most people the City of Niagara Falls is best known for its two famous cataracts--the Horseshoe and American Falls. What people may not know is that we have not one, not two, but three major business districts! The reason for this is that the City was incorporated in 1904 by the amalgamation of three separate communities, each with its own flourishing commercial centre built up during the 1800's.

Visitors to Niagara Falls can find this confusing. Tourists walk up from the Falls along Clifton Hill to Centre Street and believe it to be our "Downtown". Others pass through the Main and Ferry intersection while approaching the City from Lundy's Lane and think that this is our main commercial district. However, our actual "Downtown" or Central Business District (C.B.D.) is Queen Street with some 210 commercial establishments in the north end of the City near the Lower or Whirlpool Rapids Bridge.

As a municipal official and as a citizen of several communities during the past 28 years, I have always been a strong booster of the downtown business areas. I believe this has been evident in any of my public statements or actions. A strong and vibrant downtown always indicates a progressive and usually a prosperous city.

There are several points I would like to make, gained from my experience over the years. First, I will deal with the attitudes of some people at City Hall--both appointed and elected officials.

Sometimes municipal officials do not understand the short and long range problems of the local businessmen. They contend

that the storeowner is always complaining about high taxes, the parking situation, the condition of streets or sidewalks, garbage collection, street lighting, snow removal, etc. They make a token gesture to the business district with the occasional municipal improvement, feeling this to be sufficient and that Council should concentrate its energies on new developments in other areas of the community. In addition, some City policies are approved without the full consideration of the possible impact on the downtown areas. As a result, many commercial establishments have a difficult time keeping their heads above water, so to speak. In many cities there is little or no communication between representatives of the business community and City Hall. This situation can have only adverse results in the long term development of a city.

Many City officials sometimes forget that the taxes paid by the central business districts make up a considerable portion of the total civic budget revenues. Therefore, it seems obvious that the collective voice of the businessmen should have a major input into those policies approved by City Council having a bearing on the business community. On the other hand, the businessman must also understand the difficulties involved in running a modern city. Certain decisions have to be made and by-laws enacted which do not, and cannot, meet the approval of every segment of a community. Occasionally, the interests of the businessmen have to be secondary to the interests of the citizens as a whole.

Sometimes it is not possible or economical to construct a particular municipal building in a certain location, or rebuild a needed street, sewer or sidewalk at a particular time, or lower the taxes every year! Most civic developments and improvements have to be undertaken in a planned way in order to ensure that the economic health of the city is maintained at a high level. It is also hard to understand at City Hall why some parking lot spaces and street meters nearest the businesses in smaller cities are used by store

owners and employees. Because of this, their customers must park further away if spaces are indeed available. Could the business people not insist that their junior employees walk the extra block so that the shoppers can use these spaces?

It is quite evident from these few examples that both the businessmen and the municipal representatives can gain enormously from an exchange of ideas in the short and long term planning of goals and objectives for a particular business district. It is also obvious to me that one of the best ways to achieve this co-ordination is through the establishment of Business Improvement Areas.

Most municipalities have one or more Business Associations, but these groups are mainly concerned with the day-to-day operations of the store owners. In many cases, other commercial businesses and offices may not be members of such Associations.

I mentioned previously that Niagara Falls has three distinct business districts. We were one of the first cities in Ontario to establish improvement areas with the Downtown Queen Street District late in 1972 and the Main and Ferry District early in 1973. Both of their Boards of Management have been very active during the past three years, and numerous positive results have been achieved. With annual budgets increasing over the years to \$30,000 and \$8,000 respectively in 1976, the Business Improvement Areas (B.I.A.) have undertaken many innovative projects, including highly decorative Christmas street lighting, special promotion days, street landscaping and furniture, hanging flower baskets, short term street malls, advertising projects, etc.

About three years ago, a commercial policy for the City of Niagara Falls was adopted by Council. The resulting document declared that the City would have only one major shopping plaza and that existing business districts would be strengthened in every way possible. The fairness of this policy and the integrity of



Council's intent was recognized by the businessmen of the three commercial areas which accepted the policy statement in its entirety. As a result, they did not oppose the proposal for the new shopping centre whose construction got under way a week ago.

Meanwhile, since the commercial policy was approved, the City has constructed several large projects in the downtown area including a new library, a police headquarters, a bus transit garage, a market building, several parking lots, two high-rise senior citizens buildings, a park, major sewer, water and roadway reconstruction projects, and so on. Many of these improvements were planned and built with supportive co-operation between the City Council, City staff and the Board of Management of that Business Improvement Area.

In our case, the Boards of Management each have six business people and one Alderman as members. The Deputy Planning Director acts as the Secretary for each Board, while the City Treasurer supervises the accounting work and acts as their financial adviser. In effect, the personnel and expertise of all civic departments are available on request through the City Manager's Office.

This general set-up for the two Business Improvement Areas works very well in Niagara Falls, and I could recommend the system for any medium-sized Ontario municipality. I believe the keystone is having a senior member of the Planning Department as the major resource person to the Board. In this way, the businessmen are able to be directly advised on a monthly basis, if necessary, of civic projects which could affect the commercial districts. By this system, a co-operative relationship is effected between the two parties which could not otherwise be easily achieved.

You will be interested to know that the Planning Department has prepared an extensive preliminary report on the "Downtown Plan" which was presented at the June meeting of the Downtown Area's

Board of Management. Initial studies for this document had been developed during the past year, and it involves a 20 year plan for the redevelopment of the City's main commercial section. The proposal will require a reconsideration of the commercial, social, housing and recreational needs of the area, in addition to the long range changes to the roadways, municipal services, parking and zoning in an enlarged improvement area.

With funds channelled into such a project from the budgets of both the Board of Management and the City, it should be possible to create a unique shopping place which will soon be recognized by all visitors to our City. With a special entrance to the area from River Road and a regular bus service from the tourist section, a larger number of the visitors to Niagara Falls will also want to see and shop in our upgraded downtown area.

Incidentally, a similar type of plan is also being prepared by the Planning Department for the Main and Ferry Commercial District at the South End. This will be presented to the Board of Management of that Business Improvement Area later this year.

Let me summarize my remarks today with a few statements on the "Need for Commitment between the Business Community and the Municipality":

- Most Central Business Districts in Ontario require improvements to update buildings and services.
- City Councils must give a high priority to the maintenance of active and viable business communities.
- City Councils should officially adopt policies and programs which improve and strengthen downtown areas.
- Members of City Council should always consider the possible impact of proposed policies on the business districts.
- Local businessmen should take a greater interest in civic affairs and encourage their members to offer their services to the elected offices in the community.

- Short and long range planning of business areas should be a joint project of businessmen and City Hall.
- Funding for Business Improvement Area projects can be made easier by joint action between business areas and City Hall.
- Businessmen in commercial areas and City Council must communicate with each other on a regular basis.
- City Council and businessmen need a better means for improved communication and that vehicle is the Board of Management of a Business Improvement Area.
- Every good-sized commercial district in Ontario should therefore take every advantage of the many benefits of an organized Business Improvement Area.

There is an old adage which says that "The Lord helps those who help themselves." This could apply to every person in business communities throughout Ontario. I am sure that the people in City Hall, including members of City Council and appointed officials realize the importance of the commercial areas. The solution should be obvious to all--business people and City Hall should talk together, plan together, build together and finance the projects together. In this case, "togetherness" is more than a catch phrase; it is the solution to an urgent problem in our midst.

## 2.2 Complacency versus Change

F. Zimmer,  
Businessman,  
City of Welland.

Strange as it may seem, not everybody in your downtown wants changes. There are too many complacent and apathetic businessmen in every community, whose attitudes can destroy enthusiasm.

About ten years ago, I attended a meeting of downtown businessmen. The main item on the agenda was to discuss and plan a strategy by which a shopping centre development could be blocked. The location was to be about three city blocks away from the downtown core. Instead of welcoming a new, modern retail facility, that would have meant more shoppers in the heart of the city and, in turn, more business for the existing stores, the association members were concerned about losing trade. They were afraid of competition! About 90% of those in attendance at that meeting had been entrenched in their businesses for ten years or more. If you would mention their names to almost anyone in our City of about 40,000 people, the response would be one of recognition. Their locations are often used as points of reference in giving directions to strangers. In other words, these were established businessmen, who worked hard for many years, building a business image and reputation. They probably started small, worked hard, remodelled, expanded, re-invested some of their profits until they believed that a point had been reached in their careers at which they could afford to relax a little. And why shouldn't they take it easy. Didn't they devote countless hours for many years just to serving the public? Now, they are in the driver's seat! They have many customers who automatically come to them for whatever they need. And besides that--where else would these people shop anyway? Thus, complacency sets in, and in a little while the once



progressive looking business becomes stagnant. The paint starts peeling, the old battleship linoleum begins to wear through to the wood underlay, the old neon overhead sign begins to loose some of the sparkle in its letters, or it just flickers weakly like a tired old heart. And that's exactly what the business has become; a body which has no energy to respond to the strains of competition because the heart has grown weak. So, it just coasts along on memories and bygone days of glory, wishing for the good old days again.

I am certain that each of you can recognize this type of businessman in your downtown. With due respect to the exception, you will not receive cooperation and progressive leadership through examples like him.

Let's look at another type of retailer. He or she has a nice looking store, usually less than ten years in business, probably around five on the average. They attend the merchants' meetings once in a while, seem progressive and are agreeable to new ideas and promotions. We shouldn't have any problems with this type. But wait a minute! What about that \$75.00 he still owes to the merchants' association from the last Christmas promotion? Or when the sidewalk sale advertising was planned by the association, each participant's share was established at \$50.00, and he sends a cheque for only \$25.00? Or what about the fellow who doesn't want to participate in the combined advertising promotion but puts his wares out anyway? Do you also have these types of freeloaders? We do, and let me tell you, that this type of merchant can be just as detrimental materially to the progressive downtown as the former type I mentioned can be morally.

So far, I have talked mainly of the "independents", but let's have a look at the chain operated retail outlets. Into this category will fall the shoe stores, ladies' or men's wear shops, record and tape outlets and department stores. Most local managers

of the chains are managers in name only, in fact some are only sales clerks with a fancy title. They have the responsibility of unlocking the store and depositing the daily cash which is usually transferred to head office account immediately. Decisions are made far away from the local scene with only one goal in mind--gross profit. People in charge of the branches are not aggressive enough to fight for clearance from head office to participate in community efforts of any kind. The standard excuse is, that it's too bad they weren't approached months ago, so that they could have talked to the supervisor about it. And if you just happen to be lucky enough to meet the evasive supervisor face-to-face, he still has to check with his principals, and by the time you get a "yes" the event is over. These retailers are the leaches who only stick around long enough to draw off as much of the market as they can, and if the scene changes, they move on to other ripe areas, leaving empty stores behind them.

Then we also have the professionals and small offices. I won't spend too much time on them. Even though they are located downtown, they consider themselves separated from the problems that are facing us. The majority are of the opinion that only the merchants need people downtown and feel that it's up to the retailer to draw the crowds out. And why not? They are only downtown from nine to five, five days a week, in their air-conditioned offices that are usually located above street level. As long as they have a nicely decorated office, who cares what the street looks like. In our affluent society, the waiting rooms are overcrowded, the legal paperwork is being turned out by the ton, the adding machines never stop and the drawing boards are loaded down with layers of blueprints. Those providing these services are prospering beyond imagination, so why should they worry about downtowns?

The above-noted types of members of the business community are the fellows who would try to block the development of modern

malls in your community. These were the type in our City who objected four times with legal representation against proposed new shopping centres. Would it not have been better to spend the cost of those legal fees on promoting downtown to increase shopper traffic? Or invest some money into a few gallons of paint that would have brightened the buildings?

These are the merchants who refuse to stay open Thursday nights, even though more than half the stores are. They fail to see the obvious advantage in unity. These are the businessmen whose standard answer to any group promotion is that they are not interested, because they already tried it and it didn't work for them. I wonder if they didn't just get out of it what they put into it - nothing!

These are the businessmen who will not participate in a three-day sidewalk sale, using the excuse that their stock is not suitable for it. I dare anyone to show me a store which doesn't have old stock around or who couldn't purchase special promotional items that would add to the sale atmosphere on the street. But to take part would mean a little extra effort and a little more work than they are prepared to put into their business.

These are the businessmen who would turn down Section 361 of the Ontario Municipal Act, the implementation of which could improve their area aesthetically and help promote it as a business area. In their shortsightedness, they can only see that small extra tax burden. They didn't have Section 361 in the good old days, and they did alright without it, and besides that, they are paying enough taxes already, therefore the city should just go ahead and do it anyway!

And there are the "horse-and-buggy-day" retailers who would like to build a wall around the community to keep the shoppers from leaving, instead of building a bigger and better downtown to draw the crowds from miles around!

And then there are the businessmen who make their living in your town, but can be seen heading for the out-of-town shopping centers on their days off, sometimes driving between 50 to 100 miles one way, hoping that if they go far enough they won't run into someone from back home. That could be embarrassing! These are the businessmen who are not interested in opening a store or office in a shopping mall, because they know that the rent is much higher than downtown, and they also have to pay extra for maintenance, snow removal, promotion of the centre, stay open with everyone else and work together as a unit with their fellow businessmen. How nice it would be if, voluntarily, we could present such a united front for our downtowns.

The big question remains then--Who is left to start the re-building process in our downtowns?

You are here today because you believe in downtown! You have a vision that downtown can be a pleasant, friendly place in which people can stroll, windowshop, rest for a while, go and meet friends and spend their money! You are left to start the project. If you leave here today and believe that this is possible in your city, then your enthusiasm will spread. Maybe slowly at first, but if you don't give up, it will pick up momentum, and the skeptics will see the changes taking shape. A new sense of pride in their shops will start growing in the oldtimers; the freeloaders will start pulling their own weight; the chains will stay because they are making money; and the stubborn holdouts will reluctantly become part of the army that has taken on the monumental task of making your downtown the focal point of your city again.

The job at hand is not an easy one, and it's not a project that will be completed overnight. Whether or not you realize it, you have already taken the first step in the right direction. You have recognized the fact that it's not good enough to let things take care of themselves. You have a vision that downtown can again



be what it used to be--the heart and lifeblood of your community. But don't just settle for bringing back the good old days, when you could make better new days for yourselves. You can do it if you want to!

### 2.3. Need for A Commitment

N. McLellan,  
Businessman,  
City of Toronto.

In addressing the subject of a "Need for a Commitment" among small independent businessmen in this new era of modern retailing, perhaps we should first draw a mental picture of the composition of a typical shopping strip and attempt to analyze the attitudes of most of the merchants to their existing problems.

From my observation of my own area and the many others I have visited over the past few years, some businessmen would ideally like to be located where there were no shopping centres, little or no business taxes, oceans of free parking and sidewalks wide enough on which to display at least half the merchandise in stock. Some rarely spend a dime painting or remodelling, or make much effort to create effective window displays. If there is an association in their area, they rarely attend the meetings or contribute in any way to proposals for local improvement.

Now for the bright side of the picture. Invariably sandwiched in between are a number of progressive shopkeepers, who literally carry the others on their backs. They present a prosperous front and provide high quality goods and services to the community. Invariably, they are the leaders if any coordinated activity exists.

In the old Bloor-Jane-Runnymede Association (the forerunner of Bloor West Village), we had just such a mix: a small group of volunteers who spent 95% of their time begging voluntary membership fees from about 30 or 40 out of a possible 200 businessmen to finance some ad hoc promotion such as a parade with free balloons

which had little success in attracting more trade from the local residents.

Then in the late 50's and early 60's came the era of the two-car family and the peripheral shopping centres with their huge parking lots and their very professional promotional techniques. In 1965, our group, like all the others, decided if we were going to compete, we must have more parking. Such was the enthusiasm for this idea that we collected nearly \$4,000 from over 100 members, the biggest burst of enthusiasm in all our 15 years of operation. We entered into an arrangement with the Toronto Parking Authority to expropriate 13 homes and construct three off-street lots, providing nearly 400 parking spaces. Since a study had determined that the revenue from the lots would not liquidate the installation and operating costs, our Association agreed to assume a 20-year mortgage to be repaid by variable assessments against each business taxpayer. The parking lots were only in operation for a year and a half when the City decided to extend the westbound subway right through them, and remove the street cars from Bloor Street, where they had been dumping homeward-bound customers in front of our stores for over 30 years.

Throughout all this turmoil, we learned two things. Firstly, the extra parking had created only a marginal, if any, improvement in business, and secondly, that we would have to improve dramatically the appearance of our shopping area in order to attract the subway riders who were now transferring to buses north of our shopping strip.

In 1967, the permanent Sparks Street Mall in Ottawa was officially opened, and a group of us went to have a look. We returned home convinced that we should organize a Centennial Renewal Project in cooperation with the City, using our area as a model that others might emulate. It was the Manager at that time of the Toronto Parking Authority who first suggested that we draw up

legislation incorporating a taxing system similar to the now-abandoned parking tax plan that would provide an adequate and affordable budget levied in the same manner and with the same default penalties as the municipal business tax. Our first year's budget was a little over \$47,000 and this cost the average taxpayer \$2.65 a week--little more than coffee money. Meanwhile, a second committee met at regular intervals with various department heads at City Hall, so that we might have some input into the changes the City was about to affect along Bloor Street and so coordinate our plans to gain maximum effect.

It was at this point that attitudes began to change on all sides. The businessmen were now willing to make a contribution because they had confidence for the first time that something really worthwhile was going to be done, and that everyone was sharing the load. The "City Fathers" almost canonized us on the spot when we met with them and asked them to raise our taxes so that we could improve the appearance of the city-owned land within our trading areas. They agreed immediately to assist us in every way possible short of outright cash grants, to provide us with professional help and guidance from the expertise within the various civic departments such as Parks and Recreation, Works, Planning, Development, Parking, Sanitation, Roads and Traffic, and the Treasury Department. They also agreed to petition the Province for an amendment to the City of Toronto Act to allow them to designate our shopping strip as a "Business Improvement Area" and to collect the taxes to provide the necessary funding. We still get the same enthusiastic support from these departments today, and it is my firm belief that without this complimentary cooperation, any attempt based on this legislation will fail.

Because of the success of our venture, the Province amended The Municipal Act, and Section 361 enables all municipalities in Ontario to create Business Improvement Areas.



From my experience over the past seven years, I am absolutely convinced that Business Improvement Areas, whether they operate within an urban area such as ours which serves a community of about 20,000 within a large metropolis, or in smaller cities and towns, can only be organized and successfully maintained if there is an almost evangelistic commitment by the leading businessmen. The municipality has a great deal to gain, for such action will upgrade the rundown central core areas and encourage by example the fringe residential, institutional and industrial element to take another look at the appearance they reflect within the community.

## 2.4. St. Thomas: An Example of Joint Action

M. W. Neal,  
Mayor,  
City of St. Thomas.

St. Thomas is in the heartland of Southwestern Ontario. Its population is 26,800; we are 20 miles from downtown London and 15 minutes from three major shopping malls. Our Central Business District is the main street--Talbot Street. It is still designated a King's highway--Highway No. 3. Its length is three miles, the buildings are typical of any Southwestern Ontario town constructed in the late 19th or early 20th Century. The street is linear in form, bounded on the south by railways and intersected by railways, with substantial residential districts to the north and south and at the west and east sections. Before reconstruction, the intersections were disjointed, there was improper signalization and access from crowded arterials was difficult. There is a lack of the stacking and turning lanes, and vehicular traffic is heavy (the daily truck volume runs from 8% of some 12 to 15,000 vehicles that pass on the main street each day). Several of the buildings are deteriorated, and this includes some civic buildings; there is a problem of intersecting rail lines and, of course, the parking on the main street.

Talbot Street, however, is the principal business area of the City. It is the heart of our community. Councils have long recognized the value of commercial assessment for taxation purpose (our current ratio is 38% commercial and 62% residential), and Council had long avowed to keep the commercial area viable and a focal point for the people of St. Thomas and the surrounding district to shop. However, Council had never adopted a policy which would commit it to preserve and upgrade the downtown, or undertake

any program to protect it for the future. In 1973, a new shopping mall development in the growing east end was announced (the Elgin Mall), and it was this announcement that became a test of the words of commitment and good faith that Council had given so long to the business community.

In the 1950's and 1960's, Council had undertaken a modest program to improve services in the downtown. Parking was provided on off-street lots, and currently, we have some 700 spaces available. A by-law prohibiting overhanging signs had been passed, and we had excellent cooperation from merchants in removing such signs. Wiring and service in the early '60's was put underground, and in the late 1950's, the Norwich Plan was instituted--a plan of store front renovation by painting with a colour scheme selection to accent the architectural features of the buildings. However, the Norwich Plan never caught on, and more importantly, it was limited to a one block area and had no municipal council backing. The mall announcement, however, made it a distinct possibility that the downtown would be challenged. In addition, there was the need to replace the storm sewer on the main street. Thus, the street had to be torn up and the idea of the issue became "how to put it back together again".

A consulting firm was engaged, and local ideas and concepts were put together in design. Three plans were suggested, and Plan C was adopted by the Council. Plan C called for a curvilinear alignment of the street, wider sidewalks and no parking on the main street. This plan became very controversial and was only resolved with a vote of the electorate in 1972, who voted Plan C down. Thus, a compromise plan had to be prepared, and some eight months later, a plan was evolved which called for a one third reduction in parking, improved traffic flow signalization and intersection improvement, and more importantly, aesthetic features. These aesthetic features included: wider sidewalks by some two feet in

width, pedestrian barriers and ramps, improved lighting, benches, flower planters and waste receptacles. In addition, work was undertaken to accent certain areas of the municipality, including City Hall, small parkettes along our main street, and the Roman Catholic Church on the main street.

The result was a new street with a new sewer and most of the parking. Some 1.2 million dollars was expended in two phases, and of this sum, \$500,000 was recoverable in subsidies. The municipality received no funding from the Ministry of Housing. A four-block area of the Central Business District, some one half mile in length, was opened to traffic in 1975. This opening target was chosen to coincide with the Mall opening in October, 1975. Concurrently, in March 1974, Council, in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce and the merchants, established a Downtown Development Board in a cooperative venture. This Board marked a turning point in cooperation and in ideas and in continuous updating of the main street. Two members of Council sit on this Board.

What are the technical features of our main street? First, the lighting: The lighting chosen is on poles 18 feet high with a special feature of high/low lighting capacity. Outlets for decorative lights and for Christmas lights are on separate timers, as well as hangers for Christmas decorations. Some \$150,000 was spent for illumination and traffic signals.

Second, signs: All parking signs, directional signs, bus signs and turning signs were replaced, as were parking meter standards. All standards and signs complement the aesthetic features of the main street in a bronze polyester paint.

Third, sidewalk reconstruction: It was decided that we would use patterned concrete and interlocking brick stones. It was a very eye-catching treatment which allows for accent of major areas and which breaks the former chasm-like view of the main street.



Fourth, aesthetics: 12 benches, 38 planters, 24 refuse containers and some 113 trees were planted along the main street area. The planters are maintained cooperatively by the Downtown Development Board and the Parks and Recreation Department. This included extra work on the small parkette opposite City Hall, on City Hall itself, and on the Roman Catholic Church. The total cost of all of the aesthetic works, excluding the lighting, was \$150,000.

Fifth, services: The major new service facilities included the new sewers under the main street area, permanent road markings, an integrated traffic signalization system, pedestrian walk signing, and the provision of two thirds of the former parking spaces along the main street area.

In addition to the above-noted improvements, Council has undertaken a planned program of off-street parking lot improvement and rear lane paving improvement. Last year, some 44 spaces where the former Fire Hall stood, were brought into use, and it is planned that this year 45 spaces will be brought into use on this particular lot. All of the parking lot improvements and parking lot acquisitions were financed through our Parking Reserve Funds. We have no Parking Authority. Council, cooperatively, established with the Downtown Development Board a program for parking lot improvement. This program has proven of benefit, for the merchants are now more sympathetic to the costs involved and are more patient knowing that the program will eventually improve their city block.

During the period of reconstruction, work was scheduled with the Chamber of Commerce on a regular reporting on a liaison basis. The main street was closed to vehicular traffic, but it was always open to pedestrian traffic. Our contract for the reconstruction specified noise and vibration restrictions. Before reconstruction, the City undertook an inspection of all buildings, and we are glad to say that no claims resulted in the four-block area of reconstruction. This is remarkable in that the buildings

averaged some 80 years of age. There was much inconvenience; however, we can report that no businesses closed as a result of the reconstruction. The merchants cooperated very well and proudly wore "We dig St. Thomas" buttons with a small steam shovel indicating the street reconstruction.

The results of our reconstruction program are startling and pleasing. First, new life has been injected into the Central Business District. This is remarkable since the configuration and the age defies that particular end.

Second, Council's role changed as well. The Council had decided to upgrade essential services, to provide better access to the C.B.D., to think about traffic flow and, in general, provide convenience in a "pleasant people place" for the shoppers and visitors to our downtown.

Third, the C.B.D. has acquired new confidence among the merchants, and many have, at their own costs, updated their store front exteriors. In my view, this upgrading can be attributed to the upgrading that the municipal council did on the main street.

Fourth, we have a very active Downtown Development Board involved in tree planting, parking lot signing, store directories, and parkette reconstruction. They communicate regularly with Council and, through their initiative, have suggested that Council cooperatively with them, through the Capital Reserve Fund, extend the street lighting standards along the length of the main street. This proposal was only deferred because of fiscal restraints which we are all experiencing.

Fifth, the City has supported the initiative of the merchants who are upgrading their store front exteriors. A new transit service has been provided, we have a "Downtowner" bus as well as a "Mall" bus. But more importantly, our transit terminal, our parkette maintenance program, our walkway program, and our

rear lane and parking lot improvement program support the general reconstruction and initiative taken along the main street. This year, the City is re-surfacing a four-block area in the west end.

Sixth, there are few vacant stores on the main street. It is a busy downtown, and it has been found that the Mall complements rather than competes with our downtown. People are staying in town to shop, people are coming to town to shop, and this was an important consideration in our plan. We have the same mix of retailers and services as before the period of reconstruction, and citizens are re-discovering their downtown.

On the negative side, there was some concern over parking removal, over the restricted turning on the new main street and, definitely, some reconstruction slumps for some businesses. As mentioned earlier, there was inconvenience for both merchants and citizens, and some anxieties that the Mall parking convenience would be a definite competitive factor. However, these anxieties, for the most part, have resolved themselves, and there is a willingness among the business community to sit back and see if what we have done will work.

The Council of the City of St. Thomas intends to include in its new Official Plan a "downtown section". The Elgin Area Official Plan has placed restrictions on new shopping centre development, without a prior retail market analysis being considered. The Council is currently considering the relocation of the farmers market and is also considering means of municipal involvement in redeveloping the weaker areas of our business area. In general, our point of view would be that we are seeking means, policies and controls that will consolidate and strengthen the Central Business District in an area where there is no real major cultural or commercial anchor in our downtown areas.

In summary, then, St. Thomas was a small city faced with a fear of a major commercial shift, the loss of off-street parking and faced also with the need to update sewers. The community was embroiled in a very controversial, costly undertaking; the anxiety which resulted was genuine; however, it was resolved. Many good things have come from that resolution. The Council was committed to upgrade the services for the C.B.D., the downtown section and to prepare a new Official Plan, including an operational program of off-street parking lot improvement and rear lane improvement. A new transit facility serves the downtown area. The Downtown Development Board and Council are cooperating on a parkette and walkway improvement program. In my view, most Councillors still consider the full reconstruction of the main street a matter of necessity. The result has been a sense of accomplishment, a sense of pride and confidence which has the full support of the business community, the residents and the Council. I am convinced that the right thing was done and that good things will be done in the future.



**BLOCK IMPROVEMENT:  
FACELIFTING**

- Can be co-ordinated by a Board of Management of BIA
- Only successful if supported by all businessmen and property owners



**SHOPPING ATMOSPHERE**

- "Business Improvement Area" is a tool for upgrading the environment
- A pleasant environment makes for pleasant shopping



# 3

## HOW TO INITIATE A BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA



### **3.1 Selected Explanatory Comments on B. I. A. Legislation**

H. Billington,  
Development Officer,  
City of Toronto.

In 1968/69, the Province of Ontario passed Section 379G of The Municipal Act which was later amended to become Section 361 (see Section 3.2). This Section provides the opportunity for improvement, beautification and maintenance of municipally-owned lands, buildings and structures beyond normal or routine works of the municipality. There are also provisions for the promotion of business or shopping areas. It can safely be stated that this legislation was designed for, and created by, the initiative of local businessmen.

In the mid 1960's, a group of businessmen located on that section of Bloor Street, now known as Bloor West Village, approached the Council of the City of Toronto with the following argument. The shopping area was suffering under a 10% vacancy rate, business was down and there was a dire lack of parking facilities. The group was seeking an opportunity to reverse a severe downward trend in the local retail trade which was further threatened by the introduction of the subway transit line at the rear of the stores.

The businessmen sought the advice, in the first instance, of the General Manager of the Parking Authority who advised them to make a direct approach to Council. Basically, they were seeking the right to improve the appearance and the amenities of the strip commercial frontage on Bloor Street West. Council, at that time, did not have the power to delegate to others the right of improving municipally owned lands but invited the businessmen

in co-operation with the Legal Department of the City to draft the type of legislation required for the delegation of such powers. Out of this draft evolved Section 361 of The Municipal Act, a piece of legislation designed for, and by, retail merchants in co-operation with the Council of that day.

Section 361, or commonly known as "Business Improvement Area legislation", is the first tool to have been put at the disposal of the retail merchant located within declining strip commercial development. It is sometimes sad to note the apathy which invades strip commercial development wherein perhaps the family business, after several generations of service or the individual retailer after 15 to 25 years at his counter finds himself at the moment of decision. He has not the means as an individual to engage in competition with the modern marketing and advertising methods of the conglomerates or the tempting invitations of the "super plaza"; but he can, through the initiation of a Business Improvement Area (B.I.A.) led by a capable Board of Management, take steps to improve the appearance and announce the promotion of his strip commercial area. In short, his choices are either "to pull himself up by his boot straps and start over" or "to fold his tent and quietly steal away".

Let me point out that my reference to Section 361 as being a "local businessmen's legislation" is brought out by the fact that a Business Improvement Area may only be established on the initiative of the local businessmen, funded by them and managed by a Board of Management, the majority of which is chosen from among them, but appointed by the local Council.

The key to the establishment of a Business Improvement Area is the establishment of a local business association or rather a local business and professional association. If, for example, your Association might be interested in seeking the establishment of a Business Improvement Area, the first step is



the decision at an open meeting of your Association to approach your local municipality requesting the granting of such designation.

A letter of your Association's application will then be placed through the office of the Municipal Clerk before the local Council for consideration. Your local Council is then required to notify by letter every person using land for, or in connection with, every business in the proposed area as shown on the latest assessment roll. Persons within the proposed area who may object have a period of two months in which to present a petition. The petition must be properly addressed to the Municipal Clerk, and it is his duty to decide as to the validity of the petition. If such a petition represents an objection by one third of all those notified of the intention to declare the area a Business Improvement Area or if the assessed value of the lands held by such objectors and used as a basis for computing business assessment is equal to the value of the lands held by the remaining two thirds as used for the basis of computing business assessment, then no such application can be entertained for a period of not less than two years.

Let me stress the importance of total communication between the members of the business association so that once the idea is conceived and accepted by the membership, there shall be no time at which all of the entire membership shall not be fully aware of the proposed designation.

Following the decision of an Ontario Municipal Board hearing, which may result from objections, or in the event that no valid objections are received, the Ontario Municipal Board may approve the application. Once the application is successful, Council is required to appoint a Board of Management. This Board is a corporate body and must have at least three but not more than seven members, one of which must be a member of Council.

Each member of the Board is required to hold office for one year and must be a person qualified to be elected as a member of Council. If a vacancy occurs, Council will appoint a successor who will serve out the term of the member he replaced. Each member is required to serve his full term of office until his successor is appointed.

The Board of Management is responsible to establish and submit a budget for the current year. The budget will outline a program of improvement and promotion for the designated Business Improvement Area. Council may approve this budget, and once approval has been given, the Municipal Treasurer shall, on production of certificate from the Board of Management, pay out to the Board such funds as the Board may require to carry out its program. The Board, however, may not spend any money not approved within the budget and may not incur any debts beyond the current year. The Board will submit an audited financial statement to Council by March 1st each year, and its books and accounts will always be open to inspection by the Municipal Auditor.

If the by-law appointing a Board is repealed, all of its undertakings and assets will be assumed by the Municipality. Monies required by the budget will be recovered from business persons in the area listed on a separate business tax roll. This roll will be established by a Municipal Tax Officer upon receipt of a declaration of the boundaries of the business improvement area and prior to notice being sent by mail. The system involved in this voluntarily accepted levy is totally fair and equitable since the benefits are as general as the costs are equitable to large and small businesses. The same steps apply to the recovery of non-payment of the levy as applied to ordinary taxes. Any by-law establishing a Business Improvement Area may be repealed, but the repeal may not take effect until December 31 in the year in which it is passed.

The key to initiating the establishment of a Business Improvement Area is to have absolute discussion within your local business association. The total exercise may well be summarized as one of re-building the bridge of communication and confidence towards the betterment and enlightenment of both parties.



### 3.2. Section 361 of The Municipal Act

(Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1970,  
Chapter 284 as amended)

#### Editors' Note:

Section 361 of The Municipal Act is included in these Workshop Proceedings for purposes of convenience only; for the same purpose, the constituent subsections are preceded by topical subheadings which do not form part of the actual Statutes. For accurate reference, recourse should be had to the Ontario Statutes.

#### 1. Designation of Improvement Area and Board of Management

- (1) The council of a local municipality may pass by-laws designating an area as an improvement area and may by by-law establish for any such area so designated a Board of Management to which may be entrusted, subject to such limitations as the by-law may provide, the improvement, beautification and maintenance of municipally owned lands, buildings and structures in the area, beyond such improvement, beautification and maintenance as is provided at the expense of the municipality at large, and the promotion of the area as a business or shopping area.

#### (2) Notice of Intention

Before passing a by-law designating an improvement area, notice of the intention of the council to pass the by-law shall be sent by prepaid mail to every person occupying or using land for the purpose of or in connection with any business in the area who is shown in the last revised assessment roll of the municipality as being assessed for business assessment within the meaning of The Assessment Act.



(3) Petition Objecting to The By-law

Unless a petition objecting to the passing of the by-law referred to in subsection 2, signed by at least one-third of the persons entitled to notice as set out in subsection 2, representing at least one-third of the assessed value of the lands in the area that is used as the basis for computing business assessment, is received by the clerk within two months next following the latest day of the mailing of any such notices, the council may pass the by-law, but, if such a petition is received by the clerk within such time, the council shall not pass the by-law.

(4) Sufficiency of Petition to Be Determined by Clerk

The sufficiency of the petition described in this section shall be determined by the clerk and his determination shall be evidenced by his certificate and when so evidenced is final and conclusive.

(5) Effect of Petition Objecting to By-law

Where the council has proceeded under this section and has been prevented from passing the proposed by-law by reason of a petition objecting thereto having been presented under subsection 3, the council may again proceed under this section in respect of the area to be designated by any such by-law at any time after the expiry of the two years next following the presentation of the petition. R.S.O. 1970, c. 284, s. 361 (1-5).

(6) Board of Management

A Board of Management established under subsection 1 is a body corporate and shall consist of not fewer than three and not more than seven members appointed by council, at least one of whom shall be a member of the council and the remaining members shall be persons qualified to be elected as members of the council assessed for business assessment in respect of land in the area or nominees of corporations so assessed. R.S.O. 1970, c. 284, s. 361 (6); 1972, c. 124, s. 11.

(7) The Board's Term of Office

Each member shall hold office for a period of one year from the time of appointment, provided he continues to be qualified as provided in subsection 6.

(8) Vacancy

Where a vacancy occurs from any cause, the council shall appoint a person qualified as set out in subsection 6 to be a member, who shall hold office for the remainder of the term for which his predecessor was appointed.

(9) Holding of Office and Reappointment

The members shall hold office until their successors are appointed and are eligible for reappointment on the expiration of their term of office.

(10) Estimates and Budget

A Board of Management established under subsection 1 shall submit to the council its estimates for the current year at the time and in the form prescribed by council and may make requisitions upon the council for all sums of money required to carry out its powers and duties, but nothing herein divests the council of its authority with reference to rejecting such estimates in whole or in part or providing the money for the purposes of the Board of Management and, when money is so provided by the council the treasurer shall, upon the certificate of the Board of Management, pay out such money to the Board of Management.

(11) Expenditure of Moneys

The Board of Management shall not expend any moneys not included in the estimates approved by the council or in a reserve fund established under section 308.

(12) Time Limitation of Indebtedness

A Board of Management established under subsection 1 shall not incur any indebtedness extending beyond the current year.

(13) Annual Report

On or before the 1st day of March in each year, a Board of Management shall submit its annual report for the preceding year to council, including a complete audited and certified financial statement of its affairs, with balance sheet and revenue and expenditure statement.

(14) Auditor and Auditing

The municipal auditor shall be the auditor of each such Board of Management and all books, documents, transactions,

minutes and accounts of a Board of Management shall, at all times, be open to his inspection.

(15) Dissolution of Board

Upon the repeal of a by-law establishing a Board of Management, the Board ceases to exist and its undertakings, assets and liabilities shall be assumed by the municipality.

(16) Special Charges

The Council shall in each year levy a special charge upon persons in the area assessed for business assessment sufficient to provide a sum equal to the sum of money provided for the purposes of the Board of Management for that area, which shall be borne and paid by such persons in the proportion that the assessed value of the real property that is used as the basis for computing the business assessment of each of such persons bears to the assessed value of all the real property in the area used as the basis for computing business assessment.

(17) Collection of Special Charges

Any charge imposed under subsection 16 may be collected in the same manner and with the same remedies as provided by this Act for the collection of taxes upon business assessment.

(18) Approval of Ontario Municipal Board

No by-law designating an improvement area comes into force without the approval of the Municipal Board and as a condition of giving its approval the Municipal Board may by its order impose such restrictions, limitations and conditions with respect to such matter as may appear necessary or expedient.

(19) Repeal of By-law

A by-law designating an improvement area may be repealed to take effect upon the 31st day of December in the year in which it is passed, and subsections 2, 3 and 18 do not apply to a repealing by-law passed under this subsection. R.S.O. 1970, c. 284, s. 361 (7-19).

# 4

## HOW TO MANAGE A BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA





## 4.1. Some Organizational Suggestions

H. Boyd,  
Executive Director,  
City Core Association,  
City of St. Catharines.

### BASIC CONSIDERATIONS

I'm going to talk about the very basic elements of an association. If you don't consider all of these elements when setting up an association, your base will not be as strong as it could be. I'm not saying that you have to have all of them, but you must carefully consider each one and determine your particular needs. There are many ways of going about it. The following is the way I recommend.

I'll start at the point where the Board of Management has been appointed and is ready to hold its first planning meeting. However, I would like to state a few ideas on the make-up of the Board. The Board has to serve the entire area, therefore it should be representative of the total area. The involvement of every segment of the Business Improvement Area (B.I.A.) is most desirable, i.e., representatives of the retail, professional, service and financial communities should be on the Board. You don't want non-retailers saying "Oh, it's just another retailer's association." You need everyone's involvement.

There will also be one or two aldermen appointed to the Board. These appointed politicians represent the municipality when they attend your Board meetings; but when they attend Council meetings, they become a direct "pipeline" for you into those chambers--and that is an important thing for you, because you should have a constant platform from which, or through which, to state the opinion of the business community on many topics as they arise.

After the Board has been appointed by the municipality, the members will elect a chairman, vice-chairman and a secretary-treasurer. The term of office, under the enabling legislation, is one year; but you should try for some continuity of thought, planning, and leadership--so hopefully, at least half of the Board members will be willing to be appointed again in the second year of operation--and this kind of succession should continue. Although you cannot hold elections for the Board, you can hold a "selection" meeting of the B.I.A. membership. You could present a slate of candidates and call for nominations from the floor, then have a vote with the "winners" names being recommended to Council for appointment to the Board.

One of the first jobs that has to be done is to determine an identification for your association: a name and a logo.

#### ACTIVITY PROGRAM AND ANNUAL BUDGET

When determining what will form your activity program, you, of course, have to examine the job to be done. It will probably be made up of many parts. You have to arrange those parts in order of priority, bearing in mind what your budget will allow you to do within one year. (See Table 4-1 at the end of this paper for an example of work program.)

A business improvement area exists on a yearly basis, but that should not stop you from developing long-term plans. A three-year work activity program is fairly realistic. At the end of the first year, you knock off year one and add on one year at the end, to retain always a three-year program. Some Business Improvement Areas will have a very short life span if the job that they have to do is achievable within a year or two. Others, with much more complicated and lengthy tasks ahead of them, may exist for five, ten or even twenty years. This is not a one-shot Norwich Plan you have undertaken. Set attainable goals, and preferably, you should be able to measure the results in some way.

You may have an activity program which is for longer than one year, but you cannot commit funds beyond the one-year period, nor can you incur any debt. But you can assign dollars to your program on paper for planning purposes. (See Table 4-2 at the end of this paper for an example.)

#### POLICY-MAKING AND RELATIONS WITH ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

The Board of Management, comprised of the appointees of Council, has the authority to determine what does and does not become part of the activity program, set priorities, and apportion the funds available. The Board also sets the policy of the association on a multitude of matters. For example: if the municipality produces a report on available parking in the area, which recommends that certain on-street parking spaces be removed, the Board should consider the effect this will have on the area. It may be, that it really is the right thing to do because it will permit easier traffic flow and create less traffic jams--as long as the removal of these spaces does not dramatically alter the overall count of parking spaces. On the other hand, the Board may consider this on behalf of the total membership and decide that this is an "outrageous" move. In that case, a communication to Council should be prepared and possibly even an appointment be made to appear before Council to present your argument.

Let's assume that the Board agreed with the removal of the parking spaces. Thus, the Board has made a policy decision and is endorsing the action proposed by the municipality. However, that will not stop some of your members from being upset because people can't park in front of their premises any more. But don't forget that the Board may have to make many policy decisions that are not liked by some of the members. As long as the Board is considering what is best for the area as a whole, they should not be criticized. They will be, though, but you have to expect that.

The Board must develop a rapport with the municipal department heads. Council will never approve anything you take to them, unless the department responsible for what you are asking endorses the request. Be reasonable about your requests!

From time to time, the Board may have to deal with regional, provincial, or even the federal government. If you have built a good relationship with municipal staff, they will assist you to communicate with the other levels of government. They may have contacts that you don't have. Therefore, it's very important to establish a good relationship with the municipal staff.

The following is an example of good co-operation which occurred recently in St. Catharines. One of the items on the activity program was "Downtown Directional Signs". Downtown of St. Catharines is not the easiest place in the world to find when you come off the Queen Elizabeth Way, so we planned to design a sign to point the way, then take it to the regional government and ask their co-operation by manufacturing and installing the signs, and to send us the bill. During preliminary discussions with regional staff people, they enlightened us to the fact that traffic signs on regional roads were their responsibility. They agreed to design, manufacture and install the signs at no cost to our association. The project was completed within three weeks of that conversation! In addition, they will maintain the signs--replace any damaged ones, and clean them, as part of their normal program. I should note in this context that maintenance of physical projects can be a real problem for a Board, especially as there is no guarantee that the B.I.A. will be around for a long time.

#### COMMITTEES

I suggest that you set up working committees. As noted earlier, the Board consists of between three and seven people, and you can't expect them to do all the work necessary to make the organization viable. Depending upon your requirements, I suggest

four committees, each with a Director-in-Charge appointed by the Board, and a Chairman appointed by the Director.

(a) Promotions Committee

This committee will organize all retail promotional events and the advertising of them. The committee must have enough members on it to plan properly the events and carry them through. For example, if you have a parking stamps redemption program, the Promotions Committee should promote it to members and the public. This kind of program is not purely retail. There is no reason why financial institutions, professional offices and service companies should not participate in it. Their clients and customers have to park somewhere just as customers of retail establishments do.

Seasonal and special events promotions and advertising should be organized by this committee. They should consider developing an institutional advertising campaign to run year round--not necessarily every month, it could be in flights and be very effective.

Involvement with the community at large by sponsoring a display of school children's art, employing Boy Scouts or Girl Guides on various projects, or subsidizing a Y-activity is very worthwhile from a promotional as well as a public relations standpoint. Public relations could be assumed by this committee; or it could be handled by the next committee noted below, namely the Communications Committee.

(b) Communications Committee

This committee is responsible for internal communications, that is, the dissemination of information amongst your members. However, as mentioned above, it could handle public relations too.

It's very important to keep your members aware of how their money is being spent, and a good way of doing that is to publish and distribute a monthly newsletter or bulletin. Encourage response



from your members by offering to print their letters or personal viewpoints.

(c) Planning Committee

There are so many things that a Planning Committee can do that I feel that I have to summarize it as follows: planning of a short or long-term nature, for the use or development of publicly owned lands. Thus, it could develop a land use concept plan for the entire Central Business District, probably with the assistance of professionals; but this is something that you can do if the municipality won't, and then you offer it to Council as the basis upon which to develop an official secondary plan for the C.B.D. Bear in mind that it is a self-help program, and you can't always wait for some level of government to do things for you.

This committee can obtain plans, and given Council's approval, can undertake actual construction projects on publicly owned lands, e.g., upgrading sidewalks, beautification programs, etc. Your municipality's planning, engineering and parks departments will probably give you a lot of assistance; but they may not be able to devote as much time as your project demands, so be prepared to spend some money and hire a qualified consultant if you need one.

(d) Decorations Committee

The Decorations Committee is responsible for preparing a program of street decorations for special festivals or for any seasonal events, such as Christmas. The committee is also responsible for the purchase, erection, and taking-down of the decorations.

Most importantly, the committee has to obtain the necessary approvals. In the case of St. Catharines, we must get permission from three bodies before we can put decorations on light poles: City Council, the Regional Government because the main street is a regional road, and the Public Utilities Commission because they own the poles.

### MOTIVATING THE VOLUNTEER

There are four committees that I have mentioned above; you could have more--maybe even ad hoc committees for special requirements. If each committee has seven or eight members, plus seven on the Board, you need around forty active people, and you can get them--but you have to do it on a one-to-one basis. Don't just put in a request for volunteers in your newsletter and expect it to produce a lot of names. Sit down and write out a list of possible workers. Give each member of the Board of Management some names to contact. Make sure that every member of each committee has a job to do. Busy and active people hate to attend meetings and not see results.

This section is entitled "Motivating the Volunteer", but experienced business people should not need a lot of motivation from another person to get involved with the work of the association. Their own "good business sense" should activate them. It will activate some. It activated the instigators of your Business Improvement Area. But I think that we all know that it won't activate enough people to get the job done the way it deserves and needs to be done. So you have to go out and sell the idea. Explain your activity program, and how it will be beneficial to the entire area.

### THE NEED FOR STAFF

When do you have to hire someone to take care of the administration of the association? The budget is certainly a determining factor, but the level of activity of the association is probably more so. When there is so much going on that you need it channelled through a central source for the purpose of co-ordination, you are ready to hire someone.

Some associations have hired a retired person on a part-time basis, others on a full-time basis. Others will pay a fee to

the Chamber of Commerce to perform the role. Some will purchase professional assistance when required, and others will hire a full-time career individual. The usual title for this person is Executive Director.

The job to be performed is so varied that the ideal candidate will be experienced in business organization and administration with emphasis on marketing and be experienced in developing and executing promotional programs; he or she must have a high degree of skills in inter-personal relations at both the individual and group level and preferably be experienced in working with an organization operated by the committee system. In addition, he or she must be able to work with little supervision. Plus, it would be nice if he or she knew his or her way around City Hall! That's the ideal candidate. Try and find him or her, and if you do, don't quarrel about the salary!

#### REPORT TO COUNCIL

As you get towards the end of the calendar year, which is the Business Improvement Area's fiscal year, you have to prepare an activity program and budget for the following year.

The committees should prepare their anticipated programs and budgets and submit them to the Board of Management, who puts the whole thing together as a recommendation to the next year's Board. The retiring Board must prepare a report on its activities, and the municipal auditor will conduct an audit. Before the first of March of the subsequent year, these two items, along with the requested budget for the new year, must be submitted to Council for its approval. (See Tables 4-3 and 4-4 at the end of this paper for examples.)

SUMMARY IN POINT FORM

(a) Responsibilities of A Board of Management:

- determine the policy of the Association;
- determine the annual budget for the Business Improvement Area;
- review the activities of each committee as they relate to policy and budget;
- direct the activities of the Executive Director.

(b) Responsibilities of An Executive Director:

- administration of the financial and office functions of the Association;
- act as secretary to the Board of Management;
- in conjunction with the Chairman, represent the Association before all levels of government;
- on behalf of the Board, oversee and provide liaison with consultants;
- provide administrative support to the project committees;
- advise the project committees with regard to policy;
- co-ordinate the work of the various committees where necessary.

(c) Responsibilities of A Promotions Committee:

- elect a vice-chairman and a secretary;
- develop, document, and execute a program and budget, for its term of office, which promotes the B.I.A. as a shopping and business area; such program shall include: advertising of an institutional nature and the total organization of specific promotional events including any necessary advertising;
- ensure that the committee is comprised of sufficient number of persons to share the workload so as to accomplish the committee projects;
- establish sub-committees as required;
- provide monthly progress reports to the Board of Management;
- prepare and present to the Board of Management, a year-end summary of activities;

- recommend projects and budget for the following year and maintain a 3-year plan.

(d) Responsibilities of A Communications Committee:

- elect a vice-chairman and a secretary;
- develop, document and execute a program and budget for its term of office, which shall provide for the regular communication of information of a general nature to the membership of the Association;
- ensure that the committee is comprised of a sufficient number of persons to share the workload so as to accomplish the committee projects;
- establish sub-committees as required;
- provide monthly progress reports to the Board of Management;
- prepare and present to the Board of Management a year-end summary of activities;
- recommend projects and budget for the following year and maintain a 3-year plan.

(e) Responsibilities of A Planning Committee:

- elect a vice-chairman and a secretary;
- develop, document and execute a program and budget for its term of office, which will include projects of a physical or planning nature, to take place within the B.I.A.; such projects may include construction on publicly owned lands and/or planning for use or development of publicly owned lands;
- ensure that the committee is comprised of a sufficient number of persons to share the workload so as to accomplish the committee projects;
- establish sub-committees as required;
- provide monthly progress reports to the Board of Management;
- prepare and present to the Board of Management a year-end summary of activities;
- recommend projects and budget for the following year and maintain a 3-year plan.



(f) Responsibilities of A Decorations Committee

- elect a vice-chairman and a secretary;
- develop, document and execute a program and budget for its term of office, for the purpose of decorating B.I.A. streets during specific promotional or special events;
- ensure that the committee is comprised of a sufficient number of persons to share the workload so as to accomplish the committee projects;
- establish sub-committees as required;
- provide monthly progress reports to the Board of Management;
- prepare and present to the Board of Management a year-end summary of activities;
- recommend projects and budget for the following year and maintain a 3-year plan.

TABLE 4-1

ST. CATHARINES CITY CORE  
THREE-YEAR WORK PROGRAM

<u>Project/Activity</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u>
Demonstration Block	C, B & O	D, B & O	D, B & O
Package Delivery	-	F	O & R
CBD Plan	D	-	-
Rehabilitation	-	F	D & B
Beautification	F	D & B	D & B
Promotion	D & O	E & W	E & W
Organization/Administration	E & W	E & W	E & W
Encouraging New Business	F & D	O	O
Publicity	D & O	D & O	D & O
Newsletter	D & O	D & O	D & O
Membership Meetings	D & O	D & O	D & O
Face-to-Face Approaches	D & O	D & O	D & O
Enlisting Key Activities	D & O	D & O	D & O
Parking Stamps Program	E, D, & O	E & O	E & O
Parking Education:			
Members and Consumers	D & O	D & O	D & O
Street Decoration	D & O	D & O	D & O

Legend

F - Feasibility  
D - Design/Program Preparation  
B - Construction/Build  
O - Operation  
W - Work Program Preparation  
R - Review/Evaluate  
E - Monitor/Evaluate

TABLE 4-2

ST. CATHARINES CORE ASSOCIATION

1976 BUDGET

ADMINISTRATION

Rent	\$ 3,180
Insurance	400
Stationery Printing & Supplies	1,200
Salaries	29,805
Employee Cost (UIC, CPP, OHIP, etc.)	2,200
Employee Expenses	600
Equipment & Furniture	500
Meeting Expenses	660
Telephone	1,100
Postage	795
Audit	550
Dues, Outside Organizations	415
Library	100
Educational Courses	200
Miscellaneous & Contingencies	<u>200</u>

\$41,905

COMMITTEES' ACTIVITIES

Promotion Committee

Retail Promotions	\$ 7,000
Parking	5,000
Special Events	<u>3,000</u>

\$15,000

Decoration Committee

Centennial	\$ 5,460
Folk Arts Festival	2,560
Grape & Wine Festival	1,560
Christmas	<u>4,800</u>

\$14,380

Public Relations & Internal

Communications Committee

Newsletters	\$ 3,000
Notices to members	<u>480</u>

\$ 3,480

Planning Committee

Downtown Direction Sign Program	\$ 2,750
Consulting Fees	2,460
Demonstration Block Construction	<u>20,000</u>

\$25,210

\$58,070

December 1, 1975

\$99,975

TABLE 4-3

ST. CATHARINES CORE ASSOCIATION

BALANCE SHEETS  
AS AT DECEMBER 31, 1975

REVENUE FUND

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS	<u>1975</u>	<u>1974</u>
Cash	\$10,853	\$24,702
Due from City of St. Catharines	12,783	5,258
Prepaid Expense	61	-
	<u>\$23,697</u>	<u>\$29,960</u>

LIABILITIES AND ACCUMULATED NET REVENUE

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 6,546	\$ 9,555
Due to reserve funds	13,000	-
Provisions for redemption of parking stamps (Note 1)	1,713	1,633
	<u>\$21,259</u>	<u>\$11,188</u>
ACCUMULATED NET REVENUE - Statement 2	<u>2,438</u>	<u>18,772</u>
Statement 2	<u>\$23,697</u>	<u>\$29,960</u>

RESERVE FUNDS

ASSETS

	<u>1975</u>	<u>1974</u>
Due from revenue fund	\$13,000	-

RESERVE FUND BALANCE

Demonstration block reserve fund	<u>\$13,000</u>	<u>-</u>
----------------------------------	-----------------	----------

TABLE 4-4

ST. CATHARINES CORE ASSOCIATION

STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1975

<u>REVENUE</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1974</u>
Requisition from the City of St. Catharines Original	\$81,198 6,024	\$48,016 1,441
Supplement Taxes	\$87,222	\$49,457
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>		
Administration		
Audit	685	720
Stationery and Postage	991	477
Capital Expenditures	655	1,803
Dues and Courses	498	-
Employee Benefits	1,503	-
Insurance	369	195
Meeting Expenses	449	-
Moving Expense	997	-
Rent	4,360	-
Salaries and Wages	24,440	-
Sundry	664	629
Decorations		
Annual Installations	3,945	2,894
Capital Expenditures	6,145	5,742
Promotion	25,034	9,499
Communications	2,784	477
Planning		
Consulting Fees	12,000	7,250
Phase I Implementation	-	1,076
Taxes Written Off	4,439	199
Provision for Reserve Fund	13,000	-
	<u>\$102,968</u>	<u>\$30,961</u>
ACCUMULATED NET REVENUE AT BEGINNING OF PERIOD	18,772	276
ACCUMULATED NET REVENUE AT END OF PERIOD	<u>\$ 2,438</u>	<u>\$18,772</u>



**A DISTINCTIVE NAME FOR THE  
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA**

- Develop a 'catching' logo
- Use the name and the logo in all promotions and communiques



**ST. CATHARINES  
CITY CORE**

**NEWSLETTERS AND CIRCULARS**

- Promote the area in the community
- Show people you care . . . and they will care



## 4.2. The Role of A Board Member

P. McFadden,  
Businessman,  
City of St. Thomas.

What I would like to discuss is what a person might expect in the way of involvement and commitment as a member of a Business Improvement Area Board or committee.

The Board of Management of a Business Improvement Area is somewhat unique to most of us, as funds are asserted through the taxation system on our business community. So it may be said that we become investors for our business community as it is a Board's responsibility to use those funds to produce both tangible and non-tangible results to improve and create interest in the B.I.A. areas, and we must do this as wisely and professionally as possible to maintain the confidence and respect of our business community.

Before a person accepts a position on the Board, he/she should take the time to explore just what is involved and what sort of responsibility will be expected. Some basic points to consider before making a commitment to participate are:

- What kind of time will be involved? This can vary depending upon the type of projects in progress and the number of members to share the work. It could be as little as an hour a week, or it could be many hours a week.
- How experienced are the existing members? The more experience, of course, the smoother the operations of the Board will be.
- What will be your position on the Board? Will you be a general committee member, or will you be a committee chairman? It is always good to know what kind of role you are expected to play before you start to work.

- Are you a natural organizer? If you have a natural ability to organize, which many people do, you have a definite advantage and should find committee work very interesting.
- Are you able to work to a schedule? This is very important to have all things co-ordinated to take place at a specified time.
- Are you able to delegate authority? This, too, is very important, as no one person can handle all phases of an operation; you must be able to give concise and authoritative instructions and feel confident that they will be carried out.
- Do you have the ability to work closely and constructively with other people? This is extremely important to expedite the business of the Board as smoothly as possible.

Remember, you will not only be working with your own committee members, but also many professional and non-professional people who will have reason to come in contact with the Board. And at this point, as more and more people become involved, the problem of communication can get larger and larger. So you must attain a practice of making your actions or intentions known as concisely as possible to all people involved. As a committee member, you can expect to come in contact with many different individuals and groups such as: City Council and members of City Hall, the advertising media, the local Chamber of Commerce, members of the business community and contractors and manufacturers. Association with some of these people can be a very broadening experience and also very educational.

I have in the past participated on different committees where people did not attend meetings on a regular basis and did not share a sincere interest in undertaking and promoting the business of the committee. It is at this point, a person should

respectfully decline his/her position realizing that he/she has no positive effect on the operation of the Board.

At a glance, many of us probably are not aware of the kind of detail and preparation that is required for a seemingly basic undertaking. I would like to use some of my experience as Beautification Committee Chairman to indicate some of the procedures required to plant a tree on our main street in St. Thomas. To begin with, we had to select what we wished to undertake for the upcoming twelve-month period and establish a budget for the same. Due to the fact that we were a newly formed Board and as members had no previous experience in this area, we contacted existing Boards to gain what valuable information we could acquire from them and visited them where possible to gain first hand information. After seeing results of other Boards' tree plantings, our Board decided this would be a good project to undertake to obtain some physical results. Thus, we proceeded in the following way:

- (a) We had to consult a local nursery owner to establish what type of tree would be best suited for our needs and conditions.
- (b) We had to make arrangements for a sufficient number of trees.
- (c) We had to contact a cement contractor to cut the openings in the sidewalk for the trees.
- (d) We had to contact an electrical contractor to find out what was involved for the electrical hook-up for tree lights.
- (e) We had to contact a steel fabricator for ideas and a quote for ornamental tree guards.
- (f) The local P.U.C. had to be contacted to establish how and where electrical connections could be made.
- (g) The Engineering Department of City Hall had to be contacted to assist in the tree locations.

- (h) The Fire Department had to be contacted so as no tree locations would interfere with fire department regulations.

After all this was accomplished, we had to establish a firm quote as to total cost per tree and the location and submit it to City Council for approval. Once approval was gained, we had to coordinate all of the contractors as to when their products and services would be required.

The description just given may illustrate the depth of detail and the stages of communication required as well as the number of people that you must be in contact with. This merely confirms that a position on a Board of Management of a B.I.A. is not to be taken lightly.

# 5

## HOW TO MARKET A BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA





## 5.1. Cooperative Promotion

R. I. Pollock,  
Industrial Development Officer,  
Ontario Ministry of Industry  
and Tourism.

Let us suppose you have just become a Business Improvement Area, and the new Board of Management has just been appointed. It is most important at this point that the Board of Management has a clear understanding of the basic intent and philosophy of the marketing concept and strategy for a Business Improvement Area (B.I.A.).

The first essential element on marketing a B.I.A. is the concept of co-operative promotion as opposed to individual promotion.

The second essential element is community involvement resulting in the integration of the business and residential communities. An important part of the marketing plan of a B.I.A. should encompass the general idea of doing things for the community.

The third essential element is to incorporate non-retail cultural, artistic and recreational functions into the B.I.A. in order to give it the excitement, the mixing of people and the entertainment characteristics of a vibrant downtown.

To sum up, an effective B.I.A. should adopt the concept of recreational shopping to the retail strip through programs of beautification, promotion and community involvement.

Now, if that sounds to you like the marketing plan for a new shopping centre development, then I would say you have a good understanding already of what is basic to the marketing plan for a B.I.A.

There are a number of elementary components which one must pay attention to if the marketing of a B.I.A. is to become a success. The following represents a brief list of these components.

Public Relations and Community Services (some examples)

- street dances,
- Victoria Day community fireworks,
- Santa Claus parade,
- "old tyme Christmas",
- art and fashion shows,
- Karate exhibitions,
- antique automobile displays,
- live musical entertainment,
- programs for senior citizens,
- support for local charities and organizations  
e.g. Red Cross blood donor clinics,
- reduce vandalism by establishing areas of recreation  
for neighbourhood children,
- sponsor under-privileged children for summer camp,
- sponsor local athletic teams,
- support sports events,
- day-care facilities to assist mothers while shopping  
in area,
- sponsor recreation equipment in parks in cooperation  
with municipality;
- sponsor the recreational use of parking areas during  
non-business hours.

Such programs will not only promote the shopping district but will also create a feeling of "belonging" for nearby residents. They will create a pleasant atmosphere--an active, alive, exciting atmosphere.

## Publicity

There are two elements to develop in a B.I.A.: the internal and external ones.

### (a) Internal Promotion:

- To stimulate - participation
  - efficiency
  - activity
  - awareness (e.g., promotional calendar)
- To fight
  - indifference
  - apathy
- How
  - newsletters
  - bulletins
  - staff incentives for courtesy and service
  - decals, e.g. St. Catharines "more for you downtown"

### (b) External Promotion:

- advertising
- beautification
- community involvement

## Advertising:

Cooperative community advertising should emphasize the wide variety of stores, services and businesses all within easy walking distance, e.g., "Bloor West Villager". It symbolizes a close relationship between merchants and residents. Advertising alone will not make it popular; it should include local news, social events, anniversaries, activities and stories contributed by local residents and businesses as well as local sports events with scores and pictures (e.g., community shopping bag).

## Area Beautification:

There is a relationship between the appearance of a shopping area and its business success. An area that has deteriorated and is characterized by torn awnings, stores and signs in need of fresh paint, untidy and empty sidewalks and vacant stores is hardly an area that would justify a promotional program. Beautification

provides an atmosphere conducive to impulse shopping and an environment that will encourage customers to return. A pleasant place to stroll, a happy place to chat, to meet one's neighbours and, of course, to shop.

The planting of trees, the arrangement of flower planters, decorative lighting, benches and other street furniture at the edge of the sidewalk serves to separate pedestrians and automobiles. These additions to the streetscape also serve to unify the strip and tend to reduce the apparent distance between stores because of the visual interest created.

Where possible, commercial deliveries and garbage collection should be arranged at the rear of stores or, if this is not possible, at arranged times and of limited duration. In addition to the beautification of the main shopping street, the rear of stores and municipal parking areas should also be included in the beautification program.

#### Community Involvement:

Sponsor a sign removal by-law, for example; or sponsor a parking map and information for shoppers; or sponsor a "paint up-clean up campaign". Tie in with community parades and special occasions, e.g., hire clowns to give out balloons (advertising your B.I.A of course!!).

Special sales event such as a sidewalk sale could be a part of a larger event (e.g., western days). There could be a parade, a beauty queen contest, square dancing, fiddler's contest, horse-shoe pitching contest, a clown band, or the staff dress in western outfits. Other events that involve the community could be: best decorated bicycle contest, spot to win contest, rock and roll show (to coincide with back-to-school promotions), fire engine colouring books (distributed by firemen in uniform and prizes awarded for special age groups).

## 5.2. Underlying Marketing Principles

J. F. Harris,  
Businessman,  
City of Toronto.

When we talk about marketing a Business Improvement Area, it is quite important to gain a clear perception of the underlying principles which are involved in that work. Knowledge of these principles will assist materially in selecting those channels of effort which promise to be the most rewarding. Conversely, if there is little understanding of the essential meaning of the marketing function as related to a Business Improvement Area, then there will be a strong tendency to follow a variety of well-intended but ineffectual courses of action. So at the outset, I would like to advance the principle that the fundamental occupation about which we are talking is concerned with the creation of shopping habit in favour of the locale in question. When we appreciate that the creation of shopping habit is what we are after, then it imposes upon us some guiding and encompassing discipline.

For instance, it would tell us that involvement with some event of community interest has more beneficial potential than sporadic institutional advertising in a national magazine. It would tell us that through the process of cumulative attraction, the B.I.A. acquires an identity and importance that are somewhat independent of its constituent parts; and it would follow from this realization that in the formulation of effective area programs, there should be some release of sovereignty or individuality by stores in support of theme promotion sponsored by the B.I.A. Not all promotions correspond in season and type with what some members find most effective in their own businesses, but if such promotions are of a character to create shopping habit to the area, then



eventually all members gain. It would tell us that it is healthy to have competition within the area and that this is consistent with showing a cooperative spirit to the outside. It is better to refer a customer to a competitor within the area than allow an escape outside the area. It is useful to achieve such practices as a "common store hours" policy.

Just before leaving the subject of shopping habit, let me tell you an interesting story. Several years ago, one of the major food supermarkets in this province was studying the possibility of going to a five-day week. For this purpose, it selected a certain store that was doing very little business on Wednesdays. Subsequently, that store was shut down on Wednesdays, and its sales, costs, labour requirements, etc., were monitored carefully. The surprising result was that after some months the overall weekly volume of the store had dropped greatly, that is many times more than the earlier Wednesday volumes. The conclusion was that a gradual accumulation of minor shopping disappointments on successive Wednesdays had driven many people into new shopping experiences, and, as a consequence, the volume dropped substantially on other days of the week. The store had to be re-opened on Wednesdays, and a considerable amount of promotional money spent to regain old customers. The reason for telling this story is to illustrate how fragile shopping habit is. It has to be nurtured constantly. It indicates the need for consistent operating policies. It points out the stress to be placed upon customer satisfaction.

The Business Improvement Area by its very nature typically does not have available to it a full range of marketing strategies. It has indeed been the victim of other marketing strategies: the branch movement of major stores into regional shopping centres; the growing application of warehouse technology to the retail level of distribution in such fields as home furnishings, sporting goods,

building materials, etc. On other levels of marketing strategy, the B.I.A. does not have, for example, the pre-planned pedestrian circulation pattern of the modern shopping centre; that is, the stores characterized as pedestrian traffic generators may not be in the most advantageous locations relative to the pedestrian traffic users. Thus, it cannot duplicate the design feat of the shopping centre in making store positioning a function of the principle that retail real estate values are predicated upon the concentration of pedestrian purchasing power per front foot. Hence, the street or streets that historically created the business area in another era may now be acting as a value depressant through inhibiting pedestrian movement and concentration. Again, the business area cannot exercise the same degree of control in operating and in promotional procedures that are enjoyed by shopping centre management through the lease arrangements with tenants. There is not the same capacity to effect physical change in the light of demonstrated consumer preferences: the construction of convenient parking areas, or such conversion processes as strip shopping centres becoming malls, or open malls becoming enclosed malls, or simple shopping centres being expanded into multi-use complexes.

Yet, despite these difficulties and impediments which should be recognized and understood in the course of fashioning a counter-strategy, there is much that a business area of the type we are considering can accomplish if it unifies itself to create a worthwhile image identity.

It must be remembered that there was a historic need for the older business area and that its composition has evolved slowly over time to reflect the demands of its trading area. As there were infringements upon this trade area from competitive forces, so there were adjustments in the rental scale and kind of store in the business area. While the store types that have remained

during this process may not be models of high productivity, they are, for the most part, providing livelihood and have shown the quality of tenaciousness.

When, for whatever cause (usually, a crisis situation arising out of changed competitive circumstances), an organization is set up to market the business area, the first task that generally is feasible in wiping out a "has been" atmosphere and changing this to a more vibrant spirit of general public invitation, is a programme of clean-up, paint-up and light-up and through such embellishing elements as planting more trees, creating parkettes in unused spaces, bringing in new and distinctive street furniture in the form of street lamps, benches, garbage receptacles and a host of other decorative features, all of which as end result add up to a new mood and a new expression of purpose for the area.

It is commonly held that some credible vehicle has to be created as a prelude to an effective programme of public information. The vehicle may be in the form of the beautification procedures just mentioned or extensions thereto like new store facade treatments, creation of a semi-mall through the widening of sidewalks, etc. In any event, such a vehicle is like a platform on which various acts can be played. It can trigger advertising in newspapers or flyers; it can set the stage for a wide variety of community-involvement events; in short, it can lead to a whole new framework of useful exposure to which the public will respond in some measure.

The implied theory is easy enough to comprehend. It is in the conception and execution of the communications programme where we find the obstacles. Perhaps the first of these obstacles arises simply out of the difference in perspective in promoting a store and in promoting an area. It must be remembered that "shopping" is quite different from "buying". Buying is the result of a predetermined aim. A decision to buy a specific

article generally leads the buyer to a specific store. Shopping, on the other hand, includes a social, educative or entertainment purpose. It is more relaxed and involves the comparing of price, style and quality among several sources of supply. Since, as I said at the outset of these remarks, the fundamental occupation of an area association is the creation of shopping habit, we may be confronted with a difference in philosophy, as merchants trained in conventional store selling techniques wrestle with this broader problem.

Undoubtedly, I will draw some criticism when I say that in the absence of a rare type of leadership--a kind of dedicated, inspirational and knowledgeable leadership--there is scant chance that merchants by themselves can organize and manage on business area proportions. Their interests tend to be too self-centred for the equitable administration and harmonious relationships required in an association whose purposes are so close to their prime interest. If the association is sufficiently substantial, I think some funds expended on a neutral manager is a good investment. This kind of talent is available on a part-time or full-time basis. It is not a matter of such a manager being smarter or being able to do all the required work, rather, he is the one who has been given the time to put the problems and objectives in perspective and to engage in adequate research to attain practical ends. It has been my experience that through this prior research the manager of an association can play a useful policy role as well as carry the main burden of administration, and I regard that kind of involvement as beneficial in this kind of business area organization. It displays his judgment and gives him the prestige to cut through matters like the ones briefly described below.

Typically, cooperative newspaper or flyer advertising by a merchant association has a boxy cultured appearance, employs

poor graphics and lacks a quality look. An association manager who has gained the confidence of the merchants might be able to change that dramatically. Through some release of store sovereignty or individuality to him, the multiplicity of logos and boxes can be submerged into a new and consistent style of store identification and the artwork and copy can be re-worked to produce a flow-type of advertising reminiscent of the best major department store advertising. The object is to have attractive, effective advertising and of a kind that will project a favourable and strong image of the business area as well as get down to the gut issue of "value for the money". The theory is easy, but the accomplishment takes managerial skill and diplomacy.

Or let us consider for a moment the sponsorship of special events which, it is hoped, will capture community interest. There is a great variety in event opportunities. They can run the gamut from entertainment to education. They can be child-oriented or adult-oriented. They can be active or passive. They can consume varying amounts of audience time. I have had the opportunity of testing various types of events against the sales of different kinds of stores recorded during the event period. Let me put the results this way: real bell-ringer entertainment shows like, let me exaggerate, a reunion of the Beatles, but down to roasting oxen with free distribution of meat samples, can get a lot of attention and produce a huge crowd. However, sales in most of the stores would fall below average. The scale is inappropriate and can even cause considerable disquietude and indignant displeasure amongst the nearby residents. Far more effective are the thoughtful, usually adult-oriented, endeavours. For example, fashion shows tied into the sponsorship of local church and charitable groups who can use the event as money-raising ventures; art shows tied into the cooperation of nearby schools; in other words, events scaled to the

proportions and interests of the trading area residents. Much heated argument can be generated in rating the value of different kinds of events. Once again, the balanced view of a respected manager can facilitate harmony and cooperation.

The foregoing has touched on only a few of the issues involved in marketing a Business Improvement Area. At this point, I merely want to stress again that the business of the area management is to identify the potentials that can be high-lighted and weave them into a varied programme of community-related promotion so that shopping habits are created. It is then up to the individual stores to sharpen their own invitational appeals to take advantage of the cooperative effort.





### 5.3. Practical Examples from "Old Cabbagetown"

B. Davis,  
Businessman,  
City of Toronto.

For several years, I have attended our businessmen's association sitting on the side-lines and letting someone else do most of the work. One day, a past-president asked me to run for vice-president. I replied that I was too busy and did not wish the honour. However, he persuaded me, I reconsidered, and I was elected vice-president. A couple of months later, there was trouble with the executives, and all vice-presidents resigned. Soon after, the president died of a heart attack, and I found myself in his chair--President of the Ward 7 Businessmen's Association.

It was not my intention to be President of a dormant association. Our street was run down and our merchants lacked interest. We had not made much headway over several years. Our area was "down-downtown", an old section of our big City of Toronto. Our idea is historic in many ways. Books have been written about "Cabbagetown". Hugh Garner, Gordon Sinclair and many other well-known figures have lived in our area. In my determination to do something for our area, I inquired about what could be done to improve "Cabbagetown" and its business.

Our local alderman advised me that there was a business improvement section put through the Ontario Legislature. We investigated and applied to the City for our area to become a Business Improvement Area. Owing to our limited budget, we had to get the most out of everyone and everything available. Our committee comprised the most successful and best-known businessmen in our community, our alderman and myself.

The committee met with persons who could help us and spend some free time with us and who had knowledge and commanded respect. In addition, we hired a firm to get our ideas into a working format. The name "Old Cabbagetown" was established. A corresponding logo was introduced for crests, letterheads, windows and lamp post signs. Everything we printed was of very fine quality because we didn't want anybody to know we didn't have much money. We had to keep up a very good front.

Our approach, we decided, should be to restore the character, warmth, charm and beauty to a very old run-down part of the City. So we needed a successful articulate man with great charm who could see our needs, and one who would give us considerable free time if possible. Many meetings took place, and finally we found a person who had a lot of experience in the rehabilitation of other areas of Toronto. After many months of hard work, we had plans for the re-vamping of "Old Cabbagetown".

About twelve stores have shown improvements. Some of our contractors went broke and left us. New businesses opened, including some offices on Carlton Street, thus greatly improving the area. But due to an overall recession, no one was spending money on improvements.

The one big advantage in regards to a B.I.A. and businessmen's associations is that everyone must pay his/her share through taxes imposed and collected by the City. In shopping centres, extra money is collected from every merchant in the centre. You could be charged three or four dollars per foot for promotions; so we businessmen on the "strip" could not sit and watch, we had to do something and improve our image.

Over the past years, we celebrated Christmas in "Old Cabbagetown" with Season's Greetings posters; a Forsythia Festival in spring and a Fall Festival at which Old Cabbagetown shopping

bags, logos, post cards and placemats were given out. During the summer months, we washed the sidewalks down which were very dirty.

We made some extra money by selling coffee mugs, ash trays, hats and over 4,000 T-shirts all with our logo on them. One store managed to sell enough cabbagetown items during one weekend to make its extra "B.I.A. taxes".

Our area is very old. It used to be a rooming house district. The old rooming houses have gradually been sold to a type of resident relatively new to our area. The people, who at one time went to the suburbs, are coming back to the centre of the City and to our neighbourhood, and they are gradually transforming the area around us. So we have a new clientele to cater to, one who wants to live in our midst and take pride in our area, and we must as merchants tend to their needs.

Our problems are many: lack of interest in some merchants; early closing at nights; the interior and exterior of the buildings; beggars and persons wanting hand-outs; methods of merchandising; short-term leases and second-hand stores; too many jobless males; vandalism and shop-lifting.

Our City Council has been very good to us, and we, in turn, are doing a very necessary job in our B.I.A. If we, the merchants, don't improve the downtown area where we live and work, that same area will rot and decay to a point of no return.

The City has given us trees on the main street and adjacent side streets. Paraplegic ramps have been installed at the corners. After many years, we've got a parking lot for our area through the businessmen's association. We asked for several protected pedestrian cross walks, and the report came back that people had no problems crossing the street as traffic was light. If traffic was that light, we should be able to do away with "no-parking" during rush hour. So we worked on that aspect, and now the no-parking rush hour route was taken off to the benefit of our business area.

We now have a budget and program covering the next twelve months, outlining our activities, guiding us and pointing out our program for the year listing our traditional retail events and other promotional undertakings.

# 6

## **HOW TO DEVELOP A CONCEPT PLAN FOR A BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA: GENERAL GUIDELINES**





## 6.1. Pragmatic and Action-oriented Planning

D. Baxter,  
Program Co-ordinator for  
Community & Social Development,  
City of Oshawa.

### Downtown Planning--State of The Art

In the period from 1964 to 1968, there were numerous downtown plans produced by municipalities in Ontario. This occurred primarily due to the availability of planning funds under the Urban Renewal Program; in hindsight, it can be seen that many of the plans produced were not realistic. They were aesthetically pleasing to look at with their numerous maps, graphs and charts, but, in reality, they could never be implemented. They were not realistic in relation to the local conditions or the resources of the municipality. Many were designed with an overly generous Urban Renewal Program in mind. The purpose of this paper is not to suggest that we should be producing volumes of planning studies describing what our downtown should look like in the year 2000, but rather, to suggest that we should be producing plans which are comprehensive, pragmatic and action-oriented.

Since the demise of Urban Renewal Programs, there has been little planning done for downtowns in Ontario. Frequently, in a municipality's Official Plan, there is a broad policy statement regarding the downtown which suggests that "the core area should be preserved as the primary business and retail center"; but most often, there is little detail or follow-through into implementation which would support this goal. The Official Plan is the legal basis by which the municipality establishes land use policies and decisions. An Official Plan with broad statements which are not supported by research or consistent

commitment becomes ineffective in assisting the revitalization of the core.

In the past decade, this lack of effective downtown planning has been combined with the proliferation of suburban shopping malls, and the spread of blight in the downtown cores has accelerated. Not only has the decline been in absolute terms such as declining retail sales and service, but also in relative terms the decline is dramatic when compared with the growing prosperity of the suburban shopping centers. The need for well-researched downtown plans which are action-oriented has increased, and time for taking action before the downtown will be deteriorated beyond economic revitalization is now. Initial enthusiasm and support for the systematic upgrading of downtown areas may be kindled by the success of a beautification program sponsored and financed through Business Improvement Area Legislation; but the long-term commitment by the municipality should be established in an Official Plan or Secondary Plan Amendment adopted by Council and approved by the Minister of Housing. The use of sound planning principles operating under the unified control of the Official Plan will result in successful downtown revitalization.

#### Downtown Planning--What is An Action-oriented Downtown Plan?

A downtown plan is a clear concept of the function of the downtown in the municipality, and it establishes a strategy, or series of strategies, which determine the means and actions necessary to revitalize the core. The plan must clearly establish a municipality's policies for the core, and it will serve as a guide for controlling public and private redevelopment actions.

An action-oriented plan is composed of components which assess the underlying problems responsible for the deterioration, and it describes the short and long-term means for achieving the full potential for the downtown area. Notwithstanding the need

clearly to establish goals and objectives for the downtown area, the contents of a functional plan should include the following components:

- (1) Research and Background Studies are necessary in order to gather the facts which provide a basis or foundation upon which to build the plan. First and foremost, the plan must be based on sound economics and a thorough understanding of the underlying problems. This will mean that a trade area analysis will have to be completed in order to determine economic feasibility. This will require accurate inventories in such areas as existing and potential commercial space, parking spaces, traffic, building conditions, land ownership and land assemblies. Hard factual evidence such as this will help to determine the potential for the downtown. Once this potential is proven, people will make the necessary commitment and investment to make the plan work.
- (2) The plan will contain projections, such as future population, population distribution, incomes, disposable incomes and floor space requirements, all of which will help describe the potential for the downtown. Past experience has shown that it is difficult to forecast with any accuracy beyond a five-year period. Therefore, the projects identified within a plan should gear their implementation towards a three to five-year period, with an analysis for long-term trends and implications. Throughout the life of the plan, progress should be continually monitored, and the plan and projects should be altered to adopt changing social, economic and technical conditions.
- (3) The plan will provide for general land use and density allocations which are functionally related and based on research and growth potential for the core area.

Notwithstanding the commercial studies and policies which must be completed, there will also be a need for the following: a housing policy for the core area; the service infrastructure will have to be examined to understand what restraints service capacities impose; and obsolete functions, structures and land uses will be identified for redevelopment. Existing functions and structures which are an asset to the downtown will be identified for necessary upgrading and/or rehabilitation.

- (4) The plan should contain commercial space proposals, and key seeding projects will be identified. Commercial proposals and space allocations will have to be carefully assessed in relation to existing and potential commercial space within the economic region.
- (5) A traffic and parking plan is a necessity, and, depending upon the size of the municipality, consideration should be given to a public transit policy. Accessibility to the core and convenient parking are primary concerns. Any changes in the current traffic patterns will have to be carefully examined in regards to their social and economic consequences.
- (6) The plan should contain an urban design component. Design and site plan criteria should receive careful consideration, and possibly a "density bonusing" system could be introduced for desirable public amenities. The visual image of the downtown is gained through a series of impressions which one receives in moving from location to location; thus, standards should be developed for an orderly and attractive appearance.
- (7) The plan should be carefully drafted from a legal perspective and must contain the legal means by which it will be implemented. For example:

- Is it a secondary plan amendment to the Official Plan?
- Is it a redevelopment plan under Section 22 of The Planning Act?
- What types of zoning will implement the plan?
- Are by-laws needed under Section 35 of the Planning Act for development control?
- Are by-laws needed under Section 36 of The Planning Act for commercial and residential property maintenance standards?
- Are there provincial regulations which could prevent the implementation of a particular project?

(8) The plan must contain the financial means and timing for implementation. The manpower and money resources for implementation of projects proposed in the plan must be clearly identified. If the sources for funds which will substantially reduce the net costs of a project for a municipality can be identified, the political support to transform the paper plans into reality can usually be gathered. Who pays and who gets what are questions for which there must be precise answers. This is where a good "grantsman" at the municipal level can greatly assist in getting the plan implemented. For example:

- How can the Business Improvement Area funds be best utilized in a beautification program or in providing parking? Will the City match the funds raised by the Business Improvement Area for every dollar spent on parking?
- How can the municipal developers' levy fund be used? Can the five-percent-open-space fund be used for the provision of a downtown park or to finance partially a street mall?
- Can Ministry of Transport and Communications fifty and seventy-five percent subsidy programs be used for any solutions proposed for traffic problems or for road and sidewalk improvements?



- Can a Local Initiatives Program be used for a clean-up campaign or a facade improvement program?
- Can the Municipal Incentive Grant Program funds from Central Mortgage & Housing Corporation be used to write down the costs of land for the provision of senior citizen or assisted housing projects in the core as a means for bringing more population into the core?
- Can the Neighbourhood Improvement, Residential Rehabilitation Assistance and Ontario Home Renewal Programs be used for rehabilitating neighbourhoods in the core? For example, one city in Ontario is using Neighbourhood Improvement Program funds to provide a community school in the core, which will bring people into the downtown area, help stabilize the area and keep families in the downtown. The rehabilitation assistance funding will help stop the spread of blight and give the downtown area a better appearance.
- How can the Ontario Heritage Act be used? Can Ontario funds be used for some specified restoration project?

Even without urban renewal or rehabilitation funds, there are numerous sources of funding available which can be used through good "grantsmanship" to assist in the implementation of the public elements of the plan. Such programs serve as catalysts for the private rehabilitation and redevelopment which may be needed in order to make the core competitive. Public action is necessary so as to stimulate private investment and instill confidence in the area. Timing in the implementation of a particular project is important. The longer it takes to implement a project, the more likely it is that enthusiasm will wane and opposition will grow.

In regards to the downtown plan being part of the city's Official Plan, it must be more than a large blob of red in the centre of a map indicating "Central Business District". This type of planning does more harm than good. It is not realistic in regards to the potential for development in the city, and in many cases, it may scare away a potential developer because he receives no assurances or protection against haphazard redevelopment which may be detrimental to his project. Also, over-designation (especially through the zoning by-law) creates an artificial land market--real estate prices are inflated because every owner thinks that he is sitting on a high-rise apartment, hotel or department store development site. Land assembly is difficult enough in downtown areas with its diverse ownership without complicating the situation with unrealistic zoning. A well-conceived plan will reflect the needs of the developer as well as public goals, and such a plan can become an incentive for a developer to locate in the downtown.

Care should be taken not to go to the other extreme. Avoid drafting guidelines and regulations (especially through the zoning by-law) which create a strait-jacket of specific regulations. Often such regulations are copies from other cities' by-laws and are inappropriate to a particular development situation. Zoning is a powerful regulatory device which is seldom imaginatively used. Try and find the appropriate compromise, and be prepared to adjust to changing circumstances and unique proposals. Such adjustment will not be ad hoc and haphazard if a clear set of goals and objectives are developed for the plan.

#### Downtown Planning--Plan Objectives

In determining the overall goals and objectives for the downtown plan, all parties affected by the plan should have the opportunity to participate actively. This will include the municipal politician and staff, the downtown businessmen and the people living in the core. It is in the process of goal

formulation in which you develop a "conceptual" image of the type of downtown which you wish to achieve. Each group participating will have a different perspective which can be accommodated.

The municipal politician may want to see: increased tax assessment in terms of property and business tax; improved community pride and reputation (the downtown is the image of the city and an indication of the health of the city); increases in housing in terms of quantity and quality; more business development and job opportunities; commercial and residential rehabilitation in the core as an alternative to costly urban sprawl.

The downtown businessman may want to see: increase in gross retail sales; increase in the number of customers; and new business attracted.

The downtown resident may want to see: improved policing and security; improved maintenance; better quality living conditions and a rehabilitated neighbourhood; and preservation of historical sites.

It is important that everybody who has interest in the downtown has an opportunity to participate in the planning process in order to ensure that their individual values are reflected in the plan. The type of public participation program which can be used will be different in each municipality, but, as a general rule, the earlier participation can begin, the more likely it is that a consensus regarding the final product will evolve. By involving different groups in the planning process, commitment to ensure implementation of the plan develops. A clear statement of the objectives of the plan will result in a profound commitment, and commitment is what will make the plan work.

Downtown Planning--The First Step:  
Problem Recognition

Before starting into the detailed aspects of the research for the downtown plan, it is often necessary for the parties involved to realize the scope of the problems with which they must deal. Very often, people tend to over-simplify the problems and believe that there is only one major problem and, therefore, only one solution needed to solve the problem. For example, the downtown merchant believes that if only the city would provide a parking garage or lot, then the downtown would become competitive again. This is quite likely an over-simplification of the problems underlying the factors leading to deterioration.

Parking should be one of the many actions taken in a carefully conceived web of improvements. Deeply rooted problems will not be solved by cosmetic treatment. It is necessary to plan comprehensive action for many interrelated factors contributing to the decline of the downtown. Basically, these problems can be divided into four areas: (1) physical, (2) social, (3) economic, and (4) functional.

Physical blight refers to factors such as deteriorated buildings, air pollution, depressing or objectionable appearance of streets or properties.

Social blight refers to overcrowded homes, attitudes of dissatisfaction with the area, health and welfare problems, crime and delinquency.

Economic blight refers to poverty, unemployment, low property values and vacancies.

Functional blight refers to such conditions as traffic congestion, incompatible or conflicting arrangements of land and building use, inadequate municipal services and lack of building space suited to modern needs.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>W. E. Thompson, "Renewal in Downtown Kitchener--A Community Project," in Selected Geographical Essays, 1970, University of Waterloo.

In order to begin an assessment of the extent of the problems in your downtown, the above four categories have been used to make the following checklist of the problems most frequently present in downtowns in Ontario. Once the scope of the problems and their interrelationship are realized, the need for a comprehensive downtown plan which is action-oriented will be recognized. With a realistic downtown plan to which Council and the downtown businessmen are committed, the spread of blight in the downtown can be stopped and the benefits of a revitalized core can be realized.

(1) PHYSICAL BLIGHT

Building Conditions:

- ... Buildings seriously deteriorated
- ... Fire hazards
- ... Lack of investment in buildings by absentee landlords
- ... Serious second and third storey deterioration
- ... Buildings are functionally obsolete

Aesthetic Appearance:

- ... Cluttered and confusing signage
- ... Unattractive entrance to the downtown
- ... Visual chaos and unattractive streetscape--a clutter of poles, parking meters, trash receptacles, telephone booths
- ... Conflicting building designs and facades
- ... No open space

Services:

- ... Deteriorated roads and sidewalks
- ... Sewer overloads
- ... Overhead wires
- ... Poor lighting

(2) SOCIAL BLIGHT

Housing:

- ... Adjoining neighbourhoods deteriorated--families leaving
- ... Overcrowded living conditions in substandard buildings
- ... Unsafe accommodation on second and third floors
- ... Deteriorated rooming houses and hotels
- ... Abandoned schools, schools with declining enrollments
- ... Vandalism

Community Commitment:

- ... Minimal capital improvements
- ... No central district plan
- ... Unlimited approvals of suburban malls
- ... Lack of a focal point in the downtown area

(3) ECONOMIC BLIGHT

Merchandising and Business Activities:

- ... Lack of an anchor retail establishment
- ... Poor merchandising
- ... No combined effort in merchandising
- ... The core area is dead after 5 P.M.
- ... Drab and uninteresting interiors
- ... Second and third floors under-utilized
- ... A dormitory community oriented towards larger Metro shopping area or outlying retailers intercept the suburban consumer who might otherwise shop downtown

General:

- ... Vacant stores and lots
- ... Land assembly is difficult
- ... Slow growth area, economic base not diversified



- ... Limited form for expansion because of topography or other barriers such as railway tracks
- ... Incompatible land uses--obsolete uses

(4) FUNCTIONAL BLIGHT

Traffic:

- ... Heavy traffic passing through
- ... Heavy truck traffic
- ... Inadequate loading bays
- ... Congested, slow traffic, intensified by on-street parking

Parking:

- ... Inadequate number of spaces
- ... Parking lot location is inconvenient
- ... Poorly lighted lots with unattractive entrances to the downtown
- ... Poorly designed lots
- ... Employee use of customer parking spots.

## 6.2. Market Impact and Feasibility Studies

R. W. McCabe,  
Associate Professor,  
Department of Urban and  
Regional Planning,  
University of Toronto.

The decision by a local municipality to support the continued primacy of its business core is the first in a set of related decisions that will continue to be made for many years into the future. The development of a conceptual scheme and the adoption of policies, plans and programs of implementation have long-term consequences which it is well to recognize. Certainly, one of the vital keys to success may well be the determination and enthusiasm displayed by the decision-takers at the time. However, in the long run, success will depend almost entirely upon the level of control which can be exercised over the factors which may influence the eventual outcome.

The relationship between the functions of planning and of control has been lucidly expressed by Koontz and O'Donnell.

Planning and control are inseparable--the Siamese twins of management. Unplanned action cannot be controlled, for control involves keeping activities on course by correcting deviations from plans. Any attempt to control without plans would be meaningless, since there is no way anyone can tell whether he is going where he wants to go--the task of control, unless first he knows where he wants to go--the task of planning. Plans thus furnish the standards of control.<sup>1</sup>

All municipalities with a desire to do so have a powerful tool for the control of development in their official plans. However, an official plan can provide the control needed to support Business Improvement Areas only when the policies are (a) fully supported by the types of planning and marketing evidence that

will stand up under strong attack, for example, before the Ontario Municipal Board, and (b) carefully drafted with competent legal assistance. A number of instances can be cited of the way in which official plans have provided the required protection, or have failed to do so.<sup>2</sup>

It is the aim of this paper to indicate the retail and planning studies needed to support the retail-commercial policies of an official plan. Special emphasis is placed on plans which have the capability of providing the types of control required so that the objectives of a Business Improvement Area will not be thwarted in spite of the best intentions of the drafters. As a starting point, it is perhaps useful to express two very personal views of the intended role of the official plan.

Firstly, the official plan should be viewed as the principle operating document against which all decisions on orderly growth and development within a municipality are to be judged. It is, or should be, comparable to a corporate plan in the private sector, a document which sets out short and long-term objectives and how they are to be accomplished through a series of statements on cash flow, source and application of funds reports and projected operating statements. An official plan is not something that town planners prepare but never present, a means of keeping themselves employed. Nor is it a convenience for municipalities in adopting zoning by-laws, to be made as easy of amendment as possible to permit the decision-takers to do what they want to do when they wish to do it. It extends to all municipal departments and identifies areas of concern that need co-ordinated effort on the part of the whole of the local authority.<sup>3</sup> It relates social and economic objectives to physical planning objectives. It is the yardstick against which a development proposal is to be critically examined to see if it is directed towards the future desirable state of affairs envisaged in the plan.<sup>4</sup>

Secondly, the policy statements of the official plan are fully supportable before the Ontario Municipal Board (O.M.B.) when they have been derived by professionals whose opinions as expert witness are acceptable to the Board and where the policies have full public endorsement. Opinions on shopping centre issues and on the impact of shopping centre proposals on an existing downtown are among the most vital and complex forms of expert evidence presented before the O.M.B. The Board has consistently paid careful attention to concerns about the plight of Central Business Districts faced with unwarranted competition from badly sited and premature suburban centres if properly qualified evidence is presented to it.<sup>5</sup>

The questions for consideration then become ones of recognizing: (a) what studies are needed to prepare and, if necessary, successfully defend the retail-commercial section of an official plan; (b) when an application is received which does not appear to meet the spirit of the plan, in fact if it poses a threat to a designated Business Improvement Area, what measures are available for arguing the case of adverse impact; and (c) what the distinctions are between adverse impact and the role of free market competition in our society. Each of these questions will be dealt with in turn.

#### Retail-Commercial Official Plan Studies

Provision for orderly growth and development can be seen as the chief aim of the planning processes in Ontario.<sup>6</sup> If these processes were fully effective at all levels of government and in all jurisdictions, there would be clear, unequivocal and agreed upon policy statements on the size, location and timing of provision of additional retail floor space. Not only would there be clear policies to guide current decisions, but there would also be clear, available and carefully interpreted supporting information. There would be no doubt in the minds of all those who take part in the decision-making process about the interrelationships

which it is intended should exist between shopping and all the other components of the municipal spatial and functional structure.

Anyone approaching a locational decision within a municipality under these circumstances has a clear and unmistakable indication as to what the intentions of Council now are, and why they are the way they are. The designation of a location for a shopping centre in this form of official plan provides a powerful warning to all concerned that<sup>7</sup>

- (a) a pattern for the spatial and functional structure of the community has been adopted by Council after numerous public meetings and with due care and attention to the issues involved;
- (b) a related pattern for the spatial, hierarchical and functional structure of retailing has been adopted for the identification of suitable retail locations;
- (c) deviations from the selected pattern will not be contemplated without grave reservations; and
- (d) an appeal from the decision of Council taken under the terms of the official plan will only succeed if formidable evidence and compelling reasons can be presented to the O.M.B. for doing so. It is clear that the reasons for upsetting a decision of Council in an appeal under The Planning Act is ". . . an extraordinary remedy which should be applied in favour of (the appellant) with the greatest circumspection."<sup>8</sup>

The onus placed on the appellant becomes even more burdensome when the not inconsiderable weight of a fully supported and soundly conceived official plan stands in the way, particularly where it can be demonstrated that there has been full public participation throughout the process.

The following steps are recommended as a way of obtaining the strong level of support for business improvement areas that will be required. Each step is needed to ensure that (a) the objectives being sought are not thwarted by the success of others in obtaining permission to build retail floor space that will absorb the retail potential needed to warrant the amount of retail development foreseen in the improvement area, and (b) by the unthinking location of supporting community facilities away from the area that it is intended to bolster. It is assumed, moreover, that the studies will be conducted by competent planning professionals qualified to work in the retail-commercial area and that, if needed, these studies will be complemented by retail consultants. The general purpose of the studies is to answer the three basic questions that must eventually be asked by every urban planner:<sup>9</sup>

- (a) How much space will be required to serve the residents adequately with services they desire?
- (b) Where should the space be located?
- (c) When and under what circumstances is it anticipated that the space will be needed?

#### STEP 1

A study of the current business being done in the community by location and by type of store. This will be carried out initially in terms of the amount of gross leasable area (G.L.A.) for planned centres and its equivalent (net selling area) in older shopping areas typical of most Central Business Districts.

Where there are significant amounts of land in the municipality already zoned for retail-commercial uses, including lands that are zoned industrial under a cumulative zoning scheme, the problem of control is made more difficult. Several municipalities have approached this problem and their experiences to date should be helpful.



## STEP II

A shopping survey to determine where the town's customers come from. A variety of suitable techniques are available for doing so including licence plate and sidewalk surveys, etc. This information is used to assist in the determination of the probable boundaries of the primary and secondary trade areas of the municipality. There is no great secret about how these are defined or how they are selected. A primary trade area delineates the boundaries within which the bulk of the shopping activity of a town or a centre is generated. A secondary trade area attempts to define the broader region from which a lesser portion of the town's retail business may be expected to be drawn.<sup>10</sup>

## STEP III

An estimate of the total future purchasing potential of the residents of the trade areas delineated in Step II, for the types of stores represented in Step I. The total amount of retail floor space needed to serve the shopping public can be derived from this information. Estimates of market shares, consumer expenditures and sales per square foot of retail floor space are all used in these calculations.<sup>11</sup>

## STEP IV

A determination of the proportion of the total forecasted retail floor space needs which should be allocated to the Central Business District, or other Business Improvement Areas, and to all the other levels of the centre defined by the plan from the largest to the smallest. The number and scale of centres is predetermined in large part by the spatial and functional structure that is envisioned for the municipality and its interpretation in the official plan document. The structure of the retail facilities suitable to serve one pattern for orderly growth and development may not be suitable for another. A

hierarchy of regional, district, neighbourhood and local centres may be suitable for one town and not for another of comparable size. Some towns operate quite comfortably with two levels of shopping activity, a downtown and corner stores. Others have a more complex residential structure and a different pattern of retail centres might seem more appropriate.<sup>12</sup>

#### STEP V

Specify the relationships which it is intended should exist between shopping and all other community uses including major community activities of a governmental, social, cultural, transportation, educational, recreational or aesthetic nature. The simplest of these to specify and control is the relationship between residential activities and retail activities. In some instances, it had been the wish of the municipality that all future retail locations should be capable of becoming the focus for residential development, providing a centre to the neighbourhood and convenient, safe, economic and comfortable access for those who wish to shop other than by car.<sup>13</sup>

How the centre should be integrated into the surrounding residential areas and what grouping of related community activities should be combined into a single centre are matters of local preference and taste and may vary over time. The concept that the future retail facilities should be carefully integrated into the area they are intended to serve is no less applicable when dealing with Business Improvement Areas. The integration of the business area into its surroundings and the introduction of related and appropriate community serving activities are necessary, if not essential, conditions for continued success.<sup>14</sup>

### The Measurement of Impact

The question of the adverse impact of a proposal for a new or expanded shopping facility on an existing downtown or a Business Improvement Area has been dealt with before the O.M.B. in the past in at least two ways. Probably the most consistent and important consideration has centred on the intent of the municipalities as stated in their official plans. In three recent cases, the evidence presented made it transparently clear that the intent was that the Central Business District was to remain the principal shopping area for the municipality.<sup>15</sup> In each case, the Board made specific reference to the statement of intent and supported the notion that the desire of the municipality to retain its central focus was valid and praiseworthy.

The Board has also recognized as a valid criticism that any proposed departure by Council from its own stated intent must embrace the whole plan for the whole of the commercial space requirements for the whole of the town. Any break from the intent to support the Central Business District without any indication of studies to support the departure from the expressed philosophy in the official plan could be considered as one of the grounds for dismissing an appeal. Decisions of this nature provide additional assurance that official plans do provide protection for properly designated policies to support Business Improvement Areas.<sup>16</sup>

A further measure of security for Business Improvement Areas from adverse impact is the degree to which the actions of Council subsequent to adoption of a plan have reflected the basic philosophy which it claims to have avowed.<sup>17</sup> In one case, evidence was adduced by the appellant (against a decision of Council) to support the contention that Council had proceeded to implement the intention stated in the plan to retain the Central Business District as the main focus of retail activity. Amendments to the official plan were introduced into evidence which indicated that

Council had given permission for an added major retail development in the downtown, had reaffirmed the policy of support by adopting an urban renewal study, had embarked on a programme of acquisition of lands for off-street parking, and other consistent acts. The Board was unwilling to consider any action of Council which gave the appearance of wavering from its intent. The obverse of this decision could be, however, that the mere adoption of a policy without any signs of implementation might well be interpreted as abandonment of the policy. The conclusion would seem to be that Councils must not only seem to have adopted a policy, but must have been seen to have done so through their subsequent actions.<sup>18</sup>

In a more recent decision a new measure was introduced into the question of adverse impact for the first time in Ontario. The case involved the relative possibility for adverse impact on a thriving and healthy C.B.D. by a number of potential centres only one of which was to be approved.<sup>19</sup> Initially, the municipality was faced with applications from four centres, each of which was of a different size and each of which was located at varying distances from the C.B.D. and the areas of residential development. Because of the complexity of the market, it would be virtually impossible to tell intuitively which of the centres would have the least impact on the C.B.D. relative to the other three.

The position was changed quite dramatically by the withdrawal of two centres, the entry of another applicant in the township outside the boundaries of the city and the decision of the second of the four original applicants to amend his proposal so that the sizes of the three proposed centres was then almost exactly equal. The new situation was that there were now three centres, that there was room for only one, that adverse impact on the C.B.D. was to be avoided or minimized, that each centre was a different distance from the C.B.D. and that the Board had to arrive at a least risk solution.

However, in spite of the new situation which made it appear that the centre farthest from the C.B.D. would have the least impact, and the centre closest to it would have the most effect, all three applicants and the city relied to some extent on the use of the retail gravity model to support their cases. The Board concluded that the model was useful to all parties and did establish some benchmarks on which to build.<sup>20</sup>

#### The Role of Free Market Competition

One fundamental line of evidence is regularly advanced to counter attempts to place a limit on the amount, location and timing of new retail development. In a free market system, it is argued, full and perfect competition in the market place must be allowed to play its intended role in guaranteeing that the customers are offered the lowest possible level of prices, the highest possible level of quality and the best in customer service. The Board has been consistently mindful of this factor in its decisions, and attempts to limit retail floor space on the basis of limiting competition to the advantage of one sector of the community over another have failed. However, it is clear from the decisions of the Board, and by the actions of the retail industry itself in the way in which it has used the provisions of The Planning Act to oppose development that could harm them, that "there is competition" and "there is competition".

The line between the two interpretations seems to be drawn on the basis that before a new centre is introduced, there must be evidence to substantiate need to avoid the harmful effects of over-storing on a community and of understoring both of which can adversely affect the shopping public, local retailers and the municipality.<sup>21</sup> The Board has accepted the fact that there may be adverse impact, at least initially, on existing retailers who are located in the vicinity of proposed new development. At the same time, it takes into account the length of the recovery period for

the centre after the initial impact has been felt.<sup>22</sup> The Board has stated that a new centre does not suddenly appear out of the blue, overnight as if by magic.

Typically, several years are needed to bring a centre of any scale on to stream from the time that the necessary zoning and site plan agreements are approved. In the interval, the Board has stated, the centres that think they may be adversely affected have ample time to adjust to the new competitive position in which they find themselves. Some changes and alterations can be planned and implemented in advance to offset contemplated drops in sales in any lines of merchandise. The selection of goods and services which they offer to the market and the degree of promotional activity in which they indulge are among the competitive factors which they themselves control.

Moreover, they can begin to survey the local market more intensely to see how they may more adequately capitalize on their own unique locational advantages relative to their own immediate trade area. Factors of convenience, access, comfort, close personal service, particularly for the pedestrian shopper, have been turned to advantage and the blow of a large new centre softened.

On a broader scale, the inevitable increase in the total size of the market, both in numbers of shoppers and in personal disposable income levels, help to ensure that smaller commercial centres will not remain adversely affected for very long, provided they assume their putative roles as alert, aggressive merchandisers rather than remain as stockkeepers and cashiers.



Footnotes and References:

1. Harold Koontz and Cyril O'Donnell, Principles of Management: An Analysis of Management Functions, 5th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972, p. 115.
2. Numerous examples are to be found in the decisions of the Ontario Municipal Board. Cases in which the line of argument and the weightings assigned to various classes of evidence are particularly useful. The following decisions are referred to throughout the text. Where particular cases are cited the source is given by the name of the town and the page number only, e.g., Collingwood, p. 6.

Ontario, Decision of the Ontario Municipal Board in the Matter of Approval of Restricted Area By-law 8549 for the City of Belleville and Approval of Restricted Area By-law L(1)001-68 of the Township of Thurlow. Toronto: Ontario Municipal Board, April 23, 1970 (Files pp. 6728-68, pp. 6744-68).

\_\_\_\_\_, Decision of the Ontario Municipal Board in the Matter of Official Plan Amendments 9 and 11 for the City of St. Thomas and for Approval of Restricted Area By-law 2145A of the Township of Yarmouth. Toronto, Ontario Municipal Board, April 18, 1974 (Files S1360, R731547, R73271, R8491).

\_\_\_\_\_, Decision of the Ontario Municipal Board in the Matter of Official Plan Amendment 22 for the Town of Collingwood and for Approval of Its Restricted Area By-law 3014. Toronto, Ontario Municipal Board, March 18, 1975 (Files R741129, R731746).

\_\_\_\_\_, Decision of the Ontario Municipal Board in the Matter of a Reference of Part of the Official Plan for the Town of Whitby Planning Area with Respect to the Commercial Designation of Lands Situated at the South-West Corner of Thickson Road and Dundas Street, June 6, 1975 (File R741437).

\_\_\_\_\_, Decision of the Ontario Municipal Board in the Matter of Official Plan Amendment 74 for the City of Kingston and for Approval of Its Restricted Area By-law 8215, etc. Toronto, Ontario Municipal Board, April 28, 1976 (Files R76796, R75279, R751619, R751152, M74198, R751504, R75817, R75795, R751723).
3. John Holliday, ed., City Centre Development. London: Chas Knight & Co., 1973, p. 12.

4. J. Brian McLoughlin, Urban and Regional Planning: A Systems Approach. London: Faber and Faber, 1969, pp. 84-87.
5. See for example, Collingwood, p. 6; Kingston, p. 5.
6. Robert W. McCabe, Shopping Centre Decisions: Evaluation Guides. Toronto: Ministry of Treasury, Economics and Inter-governmental Affairs, 1971, p. 9.
7. Whitby, p. 2.
8. Kingston, p. 12.
9. A number of excellent texts are available which outline how retail studies are conducted. These include:  
Wm. Applebaum, Guides to Store Location Research. Reading, Pa.: Addison-Wesley, 1968.  
Wm. Applebaum, Shopping Centre Strategy. New York: International Council of Shopping Centres, 1970.  
In Ontario two studies specific to the provincial situation are:  
McCabe, Shopping Centre Decisions, 1971.  
Robert W. McCabe, Planning Applications of Retail Models. Toronto: Ministry of Treasury, Economics and Intergovernmental Affairs, 1974.
10. Much fuss is made before the O.M.B. about the qualifications needed to make such a determination. There are at least three fields in which the necessary expertise may be found. These are economic or marketing geography, some areas of marketing and some areas of urban and regional planning. In any case, the boundaries represent only an estimate of the extent of significant business and do not reflect differences in consumer behaviour on either side of the line. There can hardly be a municipality left in Ontario which has not been the subject of numerous trade area analyses from which some information on the most probable boundaries can be gleaned. The more supportable delineations are based on extensive shopping surveys. The less reliable ones are based on an expert's judgement.
11. The correctness of the estimates can be confirmed in at least three ways. (a) By consumer surveys conducted at place of residence. These are expensive to carry out and must be quite detailed if sufficient information is to be derived to support the consumer expenditure levels assumed

in the study area. (b) By comparing estimates of the current level of sales in the municipality derived from the market share studies for each of the trade areas with independent estimates prepared by other sources, such as the Financial Post Survey of Markets, Canadian Grocer, etc. (c) By surveys of current sales and retail footages conducted by the merchants themselves in the Business Improvement Area. This source of information could be quite important, but experience indicates that it is difficult to obtain, is of questionable reliability and is never complete. In some instances, the co-operation of a single large chain retailer will provide exceptional insights into the actual distribution of sales. The claims of marketing analyses to proprietary information is seldom reflected in their reports to the public.

There seems to be little doubt that, for the future, increasing reliance will have to be placed on large-scale consumer surveys. The farther the analyst gets away from authoritative sources of actual sales by municipality and by category of trade, the less reliable the methods of estimation of retail trade area potential become. It follows that greater emphasis will have to be placed on the adoption by analysts of the practice of economists and others who seek confirmation of their estimates through the use of at least three independent means of estimation. The last authoritative source of information about sales by trade category at a municipal level is the 1966 Census of Canada. Estimates are now ten years away from that source and are consequently of questionable validity at a fine level of detail.

An example of one source of error lies in the instance of food sales. It is typical in periods of rapid escalation in food prices for consumers to substitute lower price foods for the more expensive ones and for the shopping basket of food items employed by the agency which prepares the consumer price indices (C.P.I.) to become out of date very rapidly. Attempts to estimate current sales from past sales using the C.P.I. as one source will be biased upward because of the over statement of the actual cost of food purchases.

The phenomenon of over estimation of food sales because of rapid changes in consumer price reactions was noted in the period from 1950 to 1958 when difficulties were experienced by those who estimated food sales. The difficulties were reflected in considerable disparities between the estimates prepared by analysis and the actual sales published after the fact by Statistics Canada. The decision not to conduct an inter-censal enumeration of retail trade in 1976 will further complicate life for those concerned with forecasting future retail needs.

12. It is not unusual to limit the number and type of centres and to specify the general size of any one type that will be permitted in any location. In some instances, depending upon the pattern of residential areas that has been established, it has been the practice to limit the size of a class of centres, say 50 to 75,000 square feet, that will be permitted with a view to serving a residential population of up to 10,000 people. There are few predetermined standards that can be applied to a given municipality. The best pattern for a town can only be established after careful study of the current situation, the future needs, the structure of the community envisioned, the current attitudes of the residents and the recognition of new or emerging forms of retailing.

What should emerge from this step is a statement of the number, type, size and general locational criteria for each level of centre that it is contemplated will be required to serve the future distribution of population. The statement should include the circumstances under which consideration will be given to the designation and approval of new centres. In cases where the locations of certain centres are considered crucial to the strategy adopted by the municipality for directing orderly growth, it may be deemed prudent to designate general areas for the development of centres in the future well in advance of any application for zoning and a building permit. (Whitby, p. 2)

13. St. Thomas, p. 6.
14. Councils have direct control over the locational activities of many of the related community uses which it is desirable to introduce into business districts to create additional customer traffic for the retailers and to increase convenience for the shoppers. Particular care is required to ensure that public activities follow the same rules as retail and services uses when new locations are being sought for libraries, bus routes, public health units, recreational facilities, police stations, art galleries, municipal offices, hydro offices, etc. Council has only indirect influence over others, such as post offices, provincial government offices, rail and bus terminals, etc. The continued success of Business Improvement Areas requires that all departments of local government co-ordinate their locational activities with those of others to support the intent of Council. Legislation, moral suasion and arm-twisting are all valid techniques.
15. Kingston, p. 5; Collingwood, p. 6; St. Thomas, p. 6.
16. Collingwood, pp. 6-7.

17. Collingwood, pp. 10-11.

18. A second way of dealing with adverse impact has been to consider the evidence of expert witnesses. This type of evidence is more difficult to interpret. It also appears to be more chancy in its effect. The Board is properly insistent that the witnesses who appear to give expert opinion are really qualified to do so. Impact of retail facilities on a C.B.D. is usually deemed to be a matter for marketing specialists and does not lie within the realm of urban planning. Two positions can be taken by the experts. One is that the new centre will complement the older business areas by providing space for goods and services not currently satisfied by the existing retailers (Collingwood, pp. 10-11). The second is that there is a cumulative effect when a new centre is suitably located in a town where there is already a well established and flourishing downtown (St. Thomas, p. 9). The cumulative effect occurs when the boundaries of the trade area are expanded because the town is now doubly attractive by offering both the advantages of a well integrated downtown and a new, enclosed, climate controlled shopping centre. Each centre obtains business from the traffic generated by the other with the result that both gain.

The strength of the first argument can be measured by establishing that it is true or false. In one instance before the O.M.B. recently, it was shown that this argument was false in that the major tenant in the new centre would be an exact duplicate of the major retailer in the Central Business District (Collingwood, p. 11). It would be expected that the burden of proof would be placed on the appellant to show that the centre will not result in duplication rather than on the town to show that it would.

The strength of the second is more problematical. The argument is more likely to arise when a strong C.B.D. group opposes a proposed centre that will increase the total amount of retail floor space beyond the minimum amount needed to serve the municipality adequately. The matter then becomes truly one for the experts, and opinion plays an important role. However, in two cases before the Board, the argument about cumulative attraction was taken into account in the decisions. In one case, the point made was that an in-town centre at the focus of a new major residential development would serve to complement the C.B.D. and provide the opportunity for cumulative attraction to occur while a suburban centre in the adjacent municipality on a green fields site would do nothing for the C.B.D. or for the residents of the new residential area (St. Thomas, p. 6). In the second case, the proposed centre was located in such a way and the tenant mix so devised



that there was every reason to believe that the centre would indeed make the whole town more attractive to shoppers (Belleville, p. 5). Subsequent events showed that the cumulative attraction argument was indeed correct, at least in these two instances. The new centres did prove to be of advantage to the downtown merchants, a number of whom put on noticeable sales increases in the first season that the suburban centres were open.

19. Kingston, pp. 6 and 25.
20. The potential for the use of retail models of both the gravity and entropy maximizing versions in Ontario will be found in: McCabe, Planning Applications of Retail Models, 1974.  
The domain of validity of the use of retail models in the development of public policies for the location of retail facilities have been established in: Robert W. McCabe, "Retail Location Models and Public Decision," University of Toronto, Ph.D. Thesis, Faculty of Management Studies, 1975.
21. McCabe, Planning Applications, pp. 71-72.
22. St. Thomas, p. 6; Kingston, p. 26.



**DOWNTOWN: HEART OF THE  
COMMUNITY**

- The centre of business and . . .
- A place for people



**A SHOPPING MALL IN THE CORE**

- Develop the mall through the BIA Board of Management
- "Main Street" is not exclusively for automobiles



### **6.3. A Practical Guide to Prepare A Plan and Program**

R. Jenkins,  
Planning Commissioner,  
City of Sarnia.

Many communities find themselves faced with the problem of a deteriorating downtown area. Many reasons are probably given for this decay. It is likely that there are also many solutions put forth for the upgrading and revitalization of these areas. As time passes, attention may focus on a succession of ideas addressing this problem. Some ideas may even be tried with varying degrees of success or failure. Yet the real problem remains. It is my belief that the chances of success for any revitalization program increase significantly if such a program has its basis in a well thought-out concept plan.

This concept plan is one which is based on an overview of the situation, and it is, therefore, able to provide the basis for a well balanced sequence of actions to reverse that unwanted trend of growing decay and deterioration.

The first thing that should be done is to find out if there is a general feeling that the situation needs improving. It is difficult to motivate those who do not believe that a problem exists. If the people in one area of the downtown seem to understand the situation while another group representing another area does not, be sure that you work with the willing group. Design your plan around their needs and potential. If it succeeds, others will want to do similar things. One should never expect to convince everybody.

Once the area of support has been identified as being concerned and committed, the actual plan development process can begin. Much can be done if the will is there. It is important to have a fairly representative but small group become engaged in the core of the work, once there is general agreement that "something must be done". It is equally important to keep all parties informed of the progress being made (or not being made) along each step of the way. Involve municipal officials in these endeavours at an early stage, as they may be able to provide useful information.

Now the time has come to establish a general goal, or set of goals, for the downtown area. In essence, you should identify what kind of downtown you want to achieve within the practical limitations of the size of your community and its specific situation. It may be that a new role for the downtown will have to be chosen if a competing centre has already assumed many of the traditional functions of your downtown and if there is not enough population in the area to support a duplication of these functions.

Make a listing of improvements that would seem appropriate to your area. Examples might include some of the following:

- better overall environment,
- less noise congestion,
- easier pedestrian movements,
- better access to parking,
- relief from the hardness of the downtown scene,
- encouragement of pedestrian traffic to areas not now visited,
- increase safety,
- increase cleanliness,
- special promotional activities, e.g., sidewalk sales, Christmas decorations and others,
- sense of overall design unity (establish a theme for the downtown),
- more activity,

- more customers,
- attract more businesses and services,
- better parking,
- elimination of blighting structures.

Next, obtain a clear base map of your study area.-- It should be of a scale that allows notations to be made on it. Copies of such a map will allow important factors to be recorded and analyzed.

After having completed the above-noted preparatory work, it is the time to venture out into the area and record on one map all the problems you observe. You may want to use symbols for some of these; others may require a full written description. In any case, it is important to get these problems recorded.

Now that you may be somewhat depressed by all the problems which you have identified, it is time to record all the good points your study area has to offer. You will likely be pleasantly surprised. It is a matter of looking at your downtown in a new light. Activity centres, old buildings that would look great with minor repair, parks, civic buildings and other items may provide the necessary key elements upon which, or around which, a sound program can be developed. All of these should be noted on another copy of the area base map.

At this point, it is advisable to review all that has been done. The goals set forth, the problems, and the good points. Do the goals still seem to make sense? Are there others to be added? Do the good points suggest a theme for the area? Do they suggest activities and improvements that could take advantage of them? Do the problems present hidden opportunities for dramatic improvement? Is that vacant lot a possible site for a park or increased parking? Perhaps a new building could go there. Maybe the abandoned rail station could become a museum or an activities centre. Could some of these problems be corrected in a manner to help make

the best of a nearby good facility? Tearing down an old, dilapidated building may open up a view to the waterfront or some other natural scene. Look for the opportunities!!

From the consolidated information and data, you should be able to map the possible actions. You may want to do several plans until a plan is developed which seems best to meet the goals set out earlier. In addition to the "action map", there will likely be a need for the preparation of a list of improvements not appropriate to mapping. Examples of these are:

- better municipal services,
- police,
- traffic control,
- housekeeping,
- transit,
- minimum maintenance enforcement,
- co-ordinating of sales and service policies,
- merchant parking and transit subsidy programs,
- major quarterly promotional campaigns.

Discuss your findings with all concerned. Determine any serious oversights, any major disagreements and any further suggestions. Also, try to determine what seems to be most important and least important. Rework the plan accordingly. Potential costs and responsibilities should be identified at this time; for example:

- funding sources and mechanisms,
- land owners,
- merchant association,
- service clubs,
- municipality,
- Section 361 of The Municipal Act,
- New Provincial Renewal Program.

Review the potential impact and practical aspects of these costs and areas of responsibilities. From this review, begin to develop

a strategically based concept plan and program; that is, a plan and program which is phased to do those things first which give the best basis of moving on with the passing of time to accomplishing the majority of your objectives. Examples of higher priority items (those done first) are:

- lower cost high-visibility items,
- timing to show continuing momentum,
- items that don't require agreement of everyone to proceed,
- items that have the sympathy of a large enough group to be able to be implemented,
- items that have the support of local government,
- if official plan and other long involved processes must take place for certain items, begin with those that don't require such actions,
- in short, items that are noticeable and accomplished without much difficulty.

Estimate the cost of the revised program and determine probable responsibilities for assuming those costs. Also, indicate any expected or potential obstacles to plan and program accomplishment. It is important here also to identify possible help that is available with various pieces of legislation or through senior government grants and/or loans. Once again, go back to all concerned and review this latest proposal in detail. Seriously consider all suggestions and criticisms, regardless of where or who they come from. Also at this time, determine what level of support for action on this plan exists. How much are they willing to do at this time?

It is important to establish who will be willing to oversee the plan implementation. It is crucial that the right type of person be fully committed to stay on top of the program to see that it gets carried out effectively. This person should be someone with time, dedication, a good record of follow-through and creativity. You may have to hire someone like this. It is



well worth the investment. Possible candidates may be: merchant, member of the Chamber of Commerce, faculty member of a university or community college, or a retired person from the business community, legal profession or government.

The longest, perhaps most frustrating, part of the plan and program starts at this point--implementation. Among the required activities here are:

- make the necessary number of copies of your plan and program documents plus 100%;
- distribute copies to:
  - all who are interested,
  - the press,
  - affected government agencies,
  - business groups,
  - tourist promotion groups, etc.;
- do those things now that don't require a lot of money or approvals to get going;
- start machinery for raising money for more expensive items;
- start machinery for those items requiring lengthy approvals;
- don't procrastinate--if the momentum stops because some want a better plan or to see what happens to the economy or whatever, the total effort will likely die and be forgotten--also, others in competing areas may jump in and fill the void--keep it moving--the longer one waits, the more costly it becomes and difficult to accomplish.

A word about consultants. Depending upon the nature and scope of your program, they may be quite useful if employed properly. Many items require a high level of expertise to be done right. The proper professional talents should be used on any complicated piece of work. This, of course, requires judgement. To get a consultant where one is not needed is a waste of money; not to get one where one is needed can be a disaster.

In conclusion, I hope that I haven't scared you with this lengthy list. If you work at it steadily, step by step, keeping honest with yourself on how it is going, the process should work pretty well. Expect dissention and obstacles. In my opinion, downtowns are important in our society. These strategic areas are keys to much of our future decision-making about how we conserve what we have and how well people are served. Plan achievement may be costly to some, but a sick downtown is even more costly to more of us.

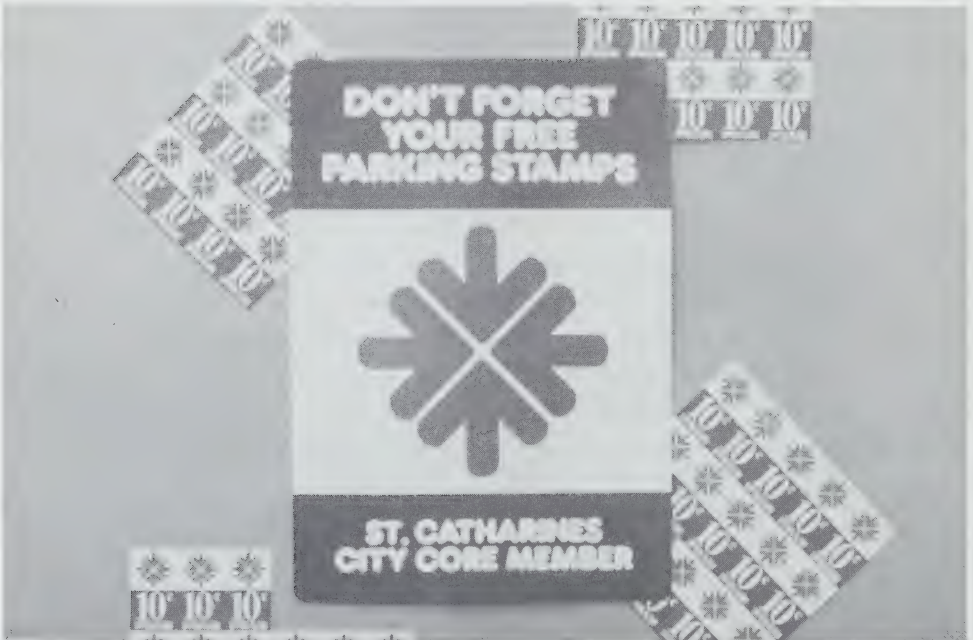
## OFF STREET PARKING

- Is it accessible, convenient and attractive to the shopper?
- Should it be municipally owned and operated?



## PARKING STAMPS

- Can they help?
- Would your BIA Board of Management undertake such a project?



# 7

**HOW TO DEAL WITH  
PARKING IN A BUSINESS  
IMPROVEMENT AREA:  
IDEAS AND EXAMPLES**



## **7. How to Deal with Parking in A Business Improvement Area: Ideas and Examples**

T. Silberberg and D. Garrett,  
"Project: Saving Small Business",  
City of Toronto.\*

In the course of four years working with "Project: Saving Small Business", we have had the occasion to interview large numbers of merchants within downtown and other retail areas throughout Ontario. We found, perhaps not too surprisingly, that the need for more and better parking facilities was expressed by many as their most important concern. Despite all the efforts made by merchant groups and municipal officials, there just never seems to be enough parking.

The origin of the parking problem in downtown and also in strip commercial developments is that most of our towns and cities were not built with the foresight of the future invention and proliferation of the automobile. Therefore, downtown can never provide the volume of parking comparable to a suburban shopping centre. Visualize downtown as it was over a hundred years ago and compare it with contemporary suburbanization and massive highway transportation systems which have given rise to the development of new peripheral shopping malls, all of which are clearly a product of the automobile age.

This competition by shopping centres, surrounded by acres of free parking, evolved because it was impossible for downtown to accommodate or overcome the problems created by the automobile. As the shopping malls expanded throughout the countryside and became part of their market areas, shopping habit, the economic and physical health of downtown and other strip commercial developments continued to erode. In other words, the spread of these

---

\* Authors of: A Guide for The Revitalization of Retail Districts.  
Toronto, 1976.



shopping centres was both the result of downtown deterioration and a cause for further deterioration. But shopping centres provide much more than acres of free parking.

Would an increase in parking facilities draw people into a decayed, rundown area? Why do some merchants complain about parking more than others? Does parking availability alone ensure business success? Or does, to some degree, the absence of "adequate" parking become merely an excuse or scapegoat for area deterioration and business decline? When is a parking problem genuine or real, and when is it merely perceived to be real?

In this paper, we are proceeding under the assumption that every area is in many ways unique. Therefore, each and every specific problem, idea, alternative and solution proposed will not apply to all communities. However, we do maintain that there is no downtown or commercial strip where parking is the only problem. The solution to that problem alone will not be synonymous with downtown revitalization. Parking must be viewed realistically as only one aspect of the multi-dimensional solution to downtown decay, abandonment and blight. An overall rehabilitation and upgrading program should emphasize, among other things:

- the importance of major retail and non-retail magnets, the need for centralized management through effective business associations, cooperation with municipal officials,
- streetscape beautification,
- the improvement and coordination of building fronts, sides, rears and above ground floors,
- effective promotion, community involvements and window display,
- interior store layout,
- the business ability of the individual proprietor; in full realization that the more successful the individual business the more successful the business district and, of course, vice versa.

The practice of on-street, or curbside, parking is as old as the automobile itself. However, while the number of on-street parking facilities has remained virtually unchanged, the number of automobiles, obviously has not. Due to a limited supply and coupled with a rapidly increasing demand, the "Parking Problem" was born. There are no magical solutions to this problem of parking motor vehicles. It, therefore, becomes necessary to view the problem more realistically.

It must be re-emphasized that parking availability alone is not the determinant of business success or decline. However, that is not to imply that it is not a factor. Obviously, certain business areas do experience genuine parking problems. Short-term on-street parking, while it might benefit one specific store, does nothing to encourage the shopper to visit the other stores and services in the area. The reality of such on-street parking, whether parallel or angle, is that it impedes traffic flow and creates congestion. However convenient it may appear, studies have shown it to be inefficient, uneconomical and, most important of all, unsafe. For example, a Guelph parking and traffic study indicated that over 75% of all accidents in the downtown area related to on-street parking. Double angle parking in the centre of a very wide street has been vehemently criticized because it forces pedestrians into the mainstream of vehicular traffic.

Increasingly, angle parking is being eliminated by municipalities throughout Ontario because it is regarded as too dangerous, requiring cars to reverse into unseen, oncoming traffic. By its very nature, it restricts and threatens street beautification by allowing the fronts of automobiles to project over the curbs and sidewalks. In Lindsay, for instance, angle parking will be replaced by parallel parking to allow for the establishment of a beautified median.

Certain business communities such as Tillsonburg pride themselves on the availability of free parking facilities. However, the question that arises is: do all the occupied spaces on the main street mean that business is booming? Or is it the employee (or merchant) parked in front of his own establishment? This illustrates why such programs as the "Dimes-On-Us", where merchants illegally feed expired meters to keep supposed customers happy, should be discouraged. This will ensure maximum efficiency of limited short-term parking facilities and will prevent wasted Association expenditures on the car of a fellow employee, merchant or customer, who abuses the program.

The question of how to regulate parking now arises; for without adequate control, parking will be on a first come, first served basis. And who are the first come?--the business people themselves. Many merchants have questioned the purpose of meters. They are not to drive shoppers away. Rather, they are to ensure that parking spaces do exist for their customers. Their primary function is to regulate the availability of parking spaces, and only secondly to produce revenue, which in many cities is placed in a special fund to be used to meet future parking requirements.

We have had the opportunity to visit nearly one hundred business communities in Ontario where we have been witness to numerous innovations in parking design and planning. A few such innovations relating to the meters themselves included the provision of free parking for customers by dispensing a golden token which could be redeemed by the merchant. In some cities, meters were colour coded to indicate varying maximum time limits, while in others meters were camouflaged by having them situated against the sides of buildings rather than curbs. And certainly, if meters are to be effective in regulating parking spaces and generating revenue, they must, of course, be enforced.

The primary purpose of revitalization, through the Business Improvement Area programs of beautification and promotion, is to attract people to the area--because it is people, and not cars that are your customers. To make it pleasant and safe for customers to shop and stroll, it becomes advantageous to separate vehicular and pedestrian traffic through the introduction of trees, flower planters and other street furniture.

In recent years, there has been a growing trend toward the removal of on-street parking to allow for the expansion of sidewalks and effective year round streetscape beautification. Good planning must be emphasized so that sufficient off-street parking facilities are made available. Truck and other vehicular traffic which uses the main street of the business area as an arterial to reach other destinations should be re-routed, where possible. This is especially important in towns where the highway becomes the main street. Both Kitchener and London have established one way street systems parallel to the main street to overcome this problem. Other areas have experimented with the pedestrian mall concept which allows for the removal of all vehicular traffic from the business area's main street. Successful temporary malls have been transformed into even more successful permanent malls such as the Sparks Street Mall in Ottawa, where the loss of relatively few on-street parking spaces was more than compensated by the subsequent increase in both pedestrian traffic and business.

The essential prerequisite to the reduction or removal of curbside spaces is that sufficient off-street parking facilities be provided. Certainly, traffic engineers and municipal officials should, and often do, accept this fact. The most common parking facility in a business area is the street-level lot.

In order to change shopping habit and to encourage use of off-street facilities, some lots provide free or almost free parking. Such unrealistically low rates are often gradually increased

as off-street parking usage develops into shopping habit. As a general principle, off-street parking rates should always be lower than those of curbside parking and should emphasize longer time availability in order to encourage patrons to visit more than one establishment and not feel hurried during their downtown shopping experience. Longer term and merchant-employee parking areas should be provided in peripheral locations leaving the best spaces for customer use. The three most common systems of regulating parking turnover and collecting revenue in off-street lots involve the meter, the lot attendant and the "pay and display concept", less costly than individual meters.

The primary advantages of the attendant in both street-level lots and multi-level parking garages are that shoppers do not have to be concerned with expiring meters, or vandalism, and merchants are able to provide "free" parking to their customers using a parking stamp validation system. If such a validation system is introduced, it is of course essential that it be promoted both in the stores and in the parking lots.

In St. Thomas, the Downtown Development Board used part of their Business Improvement Area funds to erect backlot directories of stores and services within each block. A few of the many other ideas to encourage use of off-street facilities could include painting brightly coloured lines and arrows along the roadway leading to an off-street lot or garage, or distributing maps of off-street facilities provided "free" using the parking stamp system. Temporary pedestrian malls, in addition to bringing promotional and community involvement benefits to the area, could also function to educate the shopper as to the availability, location and convenience of off-street parking facilities.

The convenience aspect could be emphasized if pleasant walkways are employed to provide easy access between backlot parking areas and front entrances. In Owen Sound great emphasis

was placed on beautifying what previously was a darkened, often unused alley. However, rear parking lot entrances to walkways should not be neglected either. In addition, automobile lane-ways should be improved and deliveries as well as garbage collection made, if possible, at the rear. Where rear delivery laneways are not available, some communities have reserved spaces for quick commercial usage. In other areas, deliveries have been limited to non-peak hours.

The practical assumption underlying beautification is that the physical environment affects human behavior. Methods to increase use of off-street parking facilities may also be related to creating a more pleasant human environment. Shopping centres have obviously realized the importance of beautifying parking areas, partly in an effort to minimize perceived walking distance to one's destination.

A parking facility does not necessarily have to be a blight on its surroundings. It could be beautified and made to appear like the off-street lots in the Bloor West Village, where fast growing poplar trees were planted behind fieldstone fencing to shield nearby residential areas from the view of parked motor vehicles. Pot holes, piled-up garbage and the appearance of deterioration will obviously do little to encourage backlot parking, especially when the rear becomes the image of the area to motorists and residents. This image of deterioration must be altered.

Because of soaring land costs as well as shortages of recreational facilities, one valid criticism of the parking lot is that it takes up too much valuable space and is unused a good many hours of the week. One answer is the idea of multi-use parking facilities in business districts such as an unfenced tennis court with removable poles and net, the painting of hopscotch or shuffleboard lines on the pavement, or the old familiar



midway carnival. On Sundays or after closing hours, the parking lot could be thrown open to the neighbourhood as a place of recreation, entertainment or display. All available backlot land does not have to be turned into concrete parking areas. Playgrounds or parkettes could also be provided for the enjoyment of both residents and shoppers. If land becomes available and merchants demand off-street parking while residents want a parkette or playground, why not do both? With municipal cooperation, parking could be moved underground with a recreation area above it. The higher construction costs could be offset by savings in property acquisition.

Cooperation is the key word when attempting to answer the question: "What is the Business Improvement Area plan going to do for our parking problems?" After all, money raised by the business community applies only to the improvement and beautification of municipally-owned land, buildings and structures, as well as promotion. Business Improvement Area funds, of course, cannot be used for the acquisition of new parking facilities. Benefiting assessment legislation may be used for that specific purpose. The two ideas, however, relate. The idea of Business Improvement Areas in Ontario actually originated with the past General Manager of the Toronto Parking Authority, Mr. Robert Bundy, who envisioned the extension of the traditional parking benefiting assessment schemes to the beautification and promotion of entire business districts; the underlying thought was that everyone benefits from these programs, therefore, everyone should pay!

In a Business Improvement Area, merchants and other business people acting cooperatively and speaking with one voice will have far greater impact when presenting their problems to municipal officials, especially regarding problems relating to parking needs. Why should the municipality commit enormous sums

of money to parking lot or garage construction if the business people do nothing to promote the upgrading of their area. By using the self-help Business Improvement Area program and also working individually to improve the physical appearance, image and quality of downtown, the merchants will demonstrate their own commitment to revitalization and should look to the municipality for cooperation on that basis.

Before municipalities can be expected to increase parking facilities, demand for such facilities must be demonstrated. An effective Business Improvement Area program will help to create such a demand. In addition to its indirect benefits relating to parking needs, Business Improvement Area funds could be used to pay for promoting parking stamp validation programs, the advertisement of existing or future parking facilities, the upgrading of parking area design standards or even market research studies.

An old cliché is that downtown will only die if those within it let it die. Programs, such as the Business Improvement Area, which demonstrate self-help and cooperation, emphasize the strides that are made toward the revitalization of downtown and other retail areas.

**FACELIFTING**  
Before . . .



. . . and after



# 8

## HOW TO BEAUTIFY A BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA: SELECTED EXAMPLES



## 8.1. Beautifying City Streets

J. Kimmel,  
Director of Parks,  
City of Toronto.

What have we got to work with? A street paved with asphalt, a sidewalk on each side, light poles, hydro and communication wires, stop lights, sign poles, hydrants, etc.--all this on the surface and even more underground. The initial task is to find out how items of beautification can be worked into this maze of utilities. So, off we go to meet with the utility companies through the Metropolitan Toronto Co-ordinating Committee.

The important task is to prove to the utility representatives that the planting of trees and other beautification facilities is an important "utility" and should be given the same consideration as all other utilities on the street. We think we have accomplished this here in Toronto.

Beautifying the street means more than just planting trees. It is improving the environment for the people who use that street whether they are motorists, pedestrians, public transit riders or others. We all want to improve our environment, so we should all be willing to work together to satisfy that need. Therefore, it is our task to beautify the city in which we live, and every citizen should have a part in that beautification. If a street is being beautified, every person living or working on the street should be consulted so as to have a part in the program. This is particularly important in a business community where the small and large businessmen are vitally concerned about attracting citizens to their stores to shop.

In the case of Toronto, when a decision has been made to beautify a street, a plan is prepared by the Parks Department.



This involves the preparation of a basic plan showing all the utilities on the street. Then the space available for the planting of trees and the placing of street furniture can be studied. A street without furniture is like a room without furniture. Add the right furniture, and it completely changes the setting. The planning of a streetscape has many constraints as has been previously mentioned. No two streets are alike, and the treatment of one street cannot be used on another one. Every street requires a complete, new set of drawings.

When the plans have been prepared for a business area, they are discussed with a group of businessmen who then show them to all people involved on the street. When they have reached agreement as to what improvements are to be made, the plans are returned to the Parks Department for any necessary changes. At this stage, the plans are reproduced and sent to all utility companies for their approval. On their return to the Parks Department, final plans can be prepared.

The final plans are discussed with the businessmen before a schedule of implementation can be set up. Some business streets can be tremendously improved with just the planting of trees, which also makes a considerable difference to the environment of the street, not just for pedestrians but also for the drivers of cars and the people who work in the stores and offices along the street.

One of the improvements made by the planting of trees is the effect achieved in separating the pedestrians from the motor vehicles when they are planted between the two. The effect trees have in improving the aesthetics of a street and the buildings is also important. They offer shade in the hot summers and a warming trend in the winters; they filter out impurities in the air as well and provide a quiet, relaxing environment to all who view them.

Some of the conflicts to be considered in planting trees on streets, apart from the existence of utilities under the sidewalk and overhead utility lines, are the sight clearances for motorists and clearances required for bus stops, fire hydrants, parking meters and other permanent fixtures on the street. With all these conflicts, there is still room for improving the street by the planting of trees and the placing of benches, receptacles, and flower containers. It all depends upon what the people want for their street.

It is most desirable to plant trees at sidewalk level so that they can live in a more natural environment. However, where underground utilities prohibit planting at grade, raised containers can be used. Where raised containers are used, the sidewalk is cut and the container placed in the cut-out portion of the sidewalk so that natural drainage can percolate through the soil. Although raised containers can be a problem with snow clearance, the parking of cars and the resultant narrowing effect to the sidewalk, they do help to increase the separation between vehicle and pedestrian and reduce the possibility of a car out of control hitting a pedestrian on the sidewalk.

The ultimate in streetscape would have to be the Sparks Street Mall in Ottawa. Here the street is closed to motor vehicles and planted with trees, shrubs and flowers, with only an emergency fire route existing on the street. This Mall is recognized as a model of a complete change of the environment for a street. So successful is this change that it has been expanded to double its original size. Other cities such as London and Kitchener have narrowed the street by taking a lane off each side and placing trees, flowers and benches on the increased width of the sidewalk.

The improvement in the business area should not be a one-year project but a continuing program. It should not be confined to one street but be encouraged throughout the municipality. The more visitors from out-of-town that can be encouraged to shop in an improved business area, the more prosperous it will be for the whole community. Remember, every street can be improved. It all depends upon you as businessmen to join together to provide the leadership in improving your business area.

## 8.2 The "Norwich Plan" in Niagara Falls

B. Hutcheon,  
Renewal Coordinator,  
City of Niagara Falls.

It should be pointed out in the very beginning that this "Norwich" scheme was not a rebuilding but simply a restoration and re-painting activity.

In Niagara Falls, a special committee was formed by a group of interested citizens with the co-operation of the Downtown Merchant's Association. As the first step, two architects were engaged to undertake the preparation of the plans and to co-ordinate the work.

The entire scheme was voluntary, and each merchant and property owner was required to do two things: (1) assume the cost of refurbishing his own premises; and (2) pay a per foot frontage assessment to underwrite the cost of tree planting, flower baskets, flags and other street improvements. The corresponding assessment was \$2.50 per foot frontage for the first floor, \$2.00 per foot frontage for the second floor and 50¢ per foot for the third floor. This assessment was in addition to the cost of renovation.

The cost of the renovation itself ranged from a minimum of 30¢ per square foot where only painting was needed, to about 70¢ per square foot where painting, shutters and other decoration were required.

From beginning to the end, the "Norwich Plan" in Niagara Falls took approximately 18 months and encompassed both sides of Queen Street, with the necessary co-operation of over 200 people. When the work was finished, two immediate effects were noticeable:

(1) an average increase in business of 22%; and (2) a spirit of co-operation had been engendered which carried over into the day-to-day relationships. As a result of these two effects, it was decided that other mutual problems such as parking and further street development should be tackled immediately.

If the scheme can be made to embrace some permanent improvement such as a car park or public gardens, its value will be greatly enhanced. It may be felt that a scheme embracing fewer than 30 properties is scarcely worth tackling, villages excepted. More than 150 properties would prove difficult to handle in one operation. Other things being equal, it should be a street or area widely used, the improvement of which will be an asset to the whole city.

After the preparation of detailed proposals for the individual premises, consultation takes place with the coordinating architect to make sure that the plans follow the agreed scheme. The proposals are then submitted to the owners and occupiers for approval. On full agreement being reached, the drawing specifications are prepared in the normal way, the tenders are obtained and contracts placed by the architects concerned on behalf of the individual property owners and occupiers, who pay for their own work. While this process is going on in regard to the buildings, a close examination must be made, in conjunction with the local authority and the statutory undertakers, of every other man-made object in the area with a view to its painting, redesign, resiting, or removal altogether, if redundant.

Before the question of what a Norwich Plan can do for your area can be answered, merchants and citizens of the community must decide what results they wish to obtain; if it is to improve business, attract tourist, re-awaken the spirit of civic or community pride or merely to make the community a

better place in which to live. If properly handled and thoroughly thought out, the Norwich Plan can do all of this and more. However, haphazard implementation of the plan must be avoided. The residents of the community must be in thorough agreement with the plans and proposals. They must understand the costs involved and the objectives to make the plan work.

In many cities throughout the country, the downtown or Central Business Districts have deteriorated for a number of reasons, and there is a diminishing ability to create an investment climate attractive to private enterprise. There must be a combined commitment of the private sector and various levels of government to provide incentives for businesses to locate in the Central Business District.

New face lifts or paint jobs alone will not achieve the goal of revitalization on a permanent basis, and in my opinion, a combination of the following should serve as a magnet to stimulate activity: (1) public service buildings; (2) rehabilitation or removal of physical structures that represent blight in the area; (3) imaginative street lighting and landscaping; (4) improvements to, or complete new facades to the older structures; (5) service; and (6) maintenance.



FACELIFTING  
Before . . .



. . . and after



### **8.3. "Project Pride" -- Financing and Building Facades**

R. Boychuk,  
Architect,  
City of Welland.

"Project Pride" was a federally assisted Local Initiatives Project sponsored by the Greater Welland Chamber of Commerce, whose goal was to re-generate or re-create a downtown environment which would be conducive to bolstering the dwindling shopper population and increase popular opinion of the core areas.

In terms of financial operation, the grant would pay for all labour while the building owner would supply all materials and special equipment such as scaffolding, larger power tools, etc. In addition to paying for labour costs in the refuse collection in the downtown core, the grant also provided for the design of individual building improvements and the project organizing costs.

The other unique fact of the project was that all the workers were provided by regional Manpower offices. At the height of the project, there were 39 people employed through Manpower at a wage that was slightly above the unemployment insurance benefit.

Despite the obvious advantages of getting work done in the downtown core for approximately one third to one quarter the cost of reducing local manpower and welfare votes and of reducing local unemployment votes, there were several disadvantages. The first drawback was the simple fact that the project itself could not buy equipment of any sort. This led to the practice of renting almost all of the equipment required by the

individual building owner. This renting also included small items like power tools and specialty saws; and because of all the the articles that had to be rented, overall costs in each case were higher than normally would be expected. These higher costs in several cases led to minor disagreements between material suppliers or renting agents and the building owners. Although we had enough foresight to withdraw the project from the middleman position in this situation, problems almost always had to be resolved by us (and in all cases, rather satisfactorily for all sides concerned). This all could have been avoided in the beginning if we would have been able to purchase the smaller articles outright and set up a pool that each job could have been drawn from. Also, in cases like the renting of scaffolding where we could not possibly buy all that we required, we should have rented a token number of scaffold sets that would also have been part of the pool and thus available for use at whichever job required it. The overall cost of setting up this pool could have been distributed to all participating building owners according to how they had used the pool.

But the major disadvantage was in the workers themselves. Of all the criteria that dictated designs, it was the limited qualifications and experience of the workers that constituted the largest damper. Although we did not apply for a variety of trades (included were bricklayers, plasterers, metal workers), the only ones we were successful in getting personnel for were the carpentry and painting categories. Of all the workers, about one third were what I could call "honest workers"; discipline left very much to be desired. This condition could have been improved greatly if Manpower had allowed us to compile and maintain a waiting list of workers. We would then have been able to spend some time in searching for a higher percentage of "honest workers".

Both discipline and inexperience could have also been greatly aided if we could have been able to convince local unions into joining our project (paying them union wages of course). Ideally, each job should have had an experienced union craftsman leading a crew of Manpower workers. This same scheme could then have been carried on to provide crews that would specialize in bricklaying, carpentry, painting, metal work, etc.; each with an experienced leader and eager well-disciplined workers. Under such a condition, the jobs would have been done quicker, more economically and more professionally; the workers would have been learning a trade and getting their foot into a possible apprenticeship after the project; and the labour unions would have been able to give more work to their members and to better their image in the public eye.

Turning to the design of the project, we started with simple objectives. Perhaps the best way of putting forth our design principles is represented in the project's title "Pride". "Pride" stands for the preservation, restoration and improvement of the downtown environment, and it best explains the initial concept. In order to achieve these principles our initial main purpose was to reduce clutter, to clean up and unify. Also to give Welland something new without sacrificing the good aspects of what Welland already was; to keep Welland as Welland. We also realized the fact that in the process of clean-up, we should strongly resist and avoid the monotony in appearance and design that is evident in many shopping malls and courtyards of today's business environment. This approach was supported by the fact that existing buildings in the downtown had sufficient differences in their original design, so that tendencies toward duplication and monotony were easily restrained. Finally, in the list of initial goals was the principle of introducing a new statement of present modern Canadian architecture.

The set of design principles then changed as we strove to interject a new humanity into the environment; not that any of the original principles were forgotten, rather that they were added onto or developed to include the creation of a warm, yet stimulating feeling. Through the use of various materials, textures, colours, configurations and shapes, we attempted to entwine these new principles into the existing molds of the downtown core.

These principles progressed through another life cycle to ensure that the downtown core was indeed for everyone. The age old problem that designers face, of how all new designs should please all its users and satisfy every little requirement, once again arose to pose interesting problems; but it also led the way to even more interesting solutions. Perhaps the best we could do was to ensure that there would be something for everyone. (This grows out of the principle to avoid duplication and monotony and is reinforced through the divergent use of materials, colours, etc.).

In practical terms of reference, you can see how these design goals operated. Primarily in the sporadic work that we did do, each graphic became the favourite of the downtown people until, of course, the next one came along; then it was the favourite and so on. Not all the graphics pleased all the people, but for every graphic that each person disliked there was at least one which made him forget the disagreeable one. Each design had camps in support of its existence and others against it, but there were none on the non-committed fence of not caring. Surely, the new entities were encouraging the environment to jump and sparkle, causing the users to talk about, and become involved with, their long lost core.

Setting up all the goals and objectives was not as hard as it may sound. I found it very simple to discover what



Welland really wanted. Despite the greatly different types of people in Welland, all were eager to discuss the images and expectations they held of their City. For this very reason, I spent the first month simply talking to the people. I didn't limit my discussions to the obvious businessmen, professional people or the interested shopper, rather I also talked to the people who had the unique experience of living above the shops and stores that made up the downtown area.

Perhaps a difference should be struck between the public spaces of business dealing and the privacy of one's own backyard. Also, one should be understanding to the point of view of an out-of-towner. The reason for this was that such a person carries away with him a very distinctive feeling of a city simply by what he sees in the downtown core.

Upon emerging out of this soul-searching period, the letters in the title "pride" again developed from what they initially stood for, into advising me to "please respect individual dignity and emotion". It was with this feeling that I began designing each individual building.

In translating all of these ideas and principles into designs and physical changes to the buildings, we decided to let the buildings speak for themselves. We simply accented their history and brought them back in up-to-date methods which incorporated our principles of humanity. We washed their faces and gave them a new suit of clothes. Some of the buildings had been left too long, so we used their skeletons and rebuilt their bodies to fit their new surroundings. Then there were some that had no personality at all to draw on (primarily large blank walls which were completely neglected). We gave birth to these important entities with a good stiff smack of colour and presented them with voices and beings through various graphic designs, again in accordance with our beliefs in humanity.



In summary, I'll tell you that for the first time ever attempted in Canada, our little project came off very well and personally left me with a huge feeling of satisfaction--and dare I say it--"pride". Certainly, there were numerous highs and lows throughout the project. We did make mistakes, but on the same note, we boldly acknowledged them and pressed on to formulate remedies.

We did manage to complete approximately 60 storefronts in a space of five months (along with record rainfalls in April and May). A large amount of credit for the number of stores worked on must go to the building owners and other downtown persons. They made things enormously easier through their good faith and favourable response. Also, mention must go to the aforementioned "honest workers". It was their eager response that really made the project go.

I think it very foolish to believe that a project of this type and miniscule size can actually bring people back into the downtown core. I see this project as a stepping stone. It is a spot to start and kick-off more, bigger and better redevelopment projects in order that change does continue and to make sure that idleness and decay can no longer come to make a home in the downtown core. Merchants and businessmen are among those who also must change. After all, a downtown is made up of more than just buildings and satisfied business practices; it is the heart of the community and should, therefore, answer to all people. It is heart-warming to see the City of Welland responding to this challenge. Soon after the project was completed, various store owners have kept the "ball rolling" with changes to their buildings completely on their own. Also, other neighbouring communities have caught the fever and are following the example set by Welland.

# 9

**ST. CATHERINES CITY  
CORE: CASE HISTORY  
OF A BUSINESS  
IMPROVEMENT AREA**



## **9. St. Catharines' City Core: Case History of A Business Improvement Area**

H. Nash,  
Businessman,  
City of St. Catharines.

The voluntary organization representing business in the downtown area of St. Catharines, using Section 361 of The Ontario Municipal Act, petitioned the St. Catharines' City Council to designate a Business Improvement Area (B.I.A.) in the downtown core and to establish a Board of Management to administer same. This action was commenced in the summer of 1972. In the face of some surprising opposition from the banking community and the local law society, the bylaw establishing the B.I.A. received sufficient support to assure its passing, and official O.M.B. approval was given in early 1973 thus officially creating the B.I.A. as of January 1st of that year.

From a base of approximately 100 volunteer members representing retailers, property owners and some professional people, the organization was now firmly established with a membership of over 400, representing everyone, regardless of vocation, who does business in the designated area and pays business tax.

In order to appease objections, it was agreed that a financial limit of \$50,000 be established in the bylaw setting up the Board of Management. It was further determined that the size of the Board should be the maximum allowable, i.e., seven persons, with two members being appointed from Council. To assure reasonable representation, the membership was divided into categories, and representation chosen from each in the following manner: one each from the financial sector (banks, trust companies, etc.), the service sector (Bell Canada, public utilities,

provincial gas, etc.), and from the professional sector (doctors, lawyers, etc.) and two members to represent the retail trade. In fact, the first Board was made up of the manager of a trust company, the regional manager of Bell Canada, a prominent lawyer, two long-time local retailers, and two aldermen representing City Council.

The volunteer organization had been operating on a budget of \$20,000 a year, usually over-spending by a thousand dollars or two what they were able actually to collect. As a result, the directors spent a good deal of time raising funds to cover this shortfall. The new organization was no longer faced with such financial problems; it was able to look immediately to program and promotional activities on behalf of its membership.

It was determined that the first year's activities concentrate on planning and be mainly a "holding effort". This implied the continuation of the successful programs that had been initiated by the volunteer group. Thus, the Board of Management was allowed the required time to prepare a comprehensive plan of action.

City Hall, through the Business Development Office, provided a great deal of assistance in the organizational stages of this new group. This spirit of co-operation exists to this day and is one that we are continually grateful for and, in many ways, very proud of. The Business Development Office provided us with secretarial services and a central location for records. Meetings were held in City Hall--and still are--to which, even now, the Mayor, the City Administrator and the Business Development Director are invited (and they usually attend). This arrangement was particularly helpful in our formative years, providing us with the continuity necessary to establish a viable organization.

The first year's budget was \$25,000; it was sufficient to maintain a reasonable level of activity as we were engaged in

planning for the future. The Board members assumed individual responsibility for a portion of the program, dividing the work load into committees which they oversaw as "Director-in-Charge". These committees were broken down into Promotion, Decorations, Communications, and Planning. Each Director was asked to establish a committee consisting of a chairman and as many other members as necessary to complete their respective programs. This approach worked well as we progressed through our first year's "holding" program.

Now it was time to come to grips with our problems, attempt to find solutions for them, and then to develop a plan to implement these solutions. Our first task was to try to achieve a consensus of what our problems really were. After considerable discussion, deep searching and often heated debate, we were able to isolate three distinct problem areas. These can be categorized as : (a) Communications--both internal among our members and external, directed to the people we serve; (b) Marketing--to include parking availability, traffic patterns, street decorations, as well as general activities associated with retail promotions; and (c) Planning--to deal with the physical appearance of the Business Improvement Area as well as land use and the C.B.D. official plan.

Without permanent staff and depending upon the limited services provided by City Hall, the volunteer efforts and the appointed Board of Management, it soon became apparent that finding the solutions to our identified problems would be no easy task. The Board decided that it was not in a position to hire permanent staff and decided rather to look for professional help on a contract basis. The Planning Committee was given the task of recommending how we should proceed. After considerable efforts on their part over a period of three to four months, they finally suggested that we hire the services of a well-known firm



to advise us. We entered into a contract with them, which in July of 1974 resulted in the completion of their report, entitled "City Core Work Program: A Guide to Action". Their basic assignment had been to formulate goals and objectives for the future development and functioning of the St. Catharines' C.B.D. and then to translate these goals and objectives into a realistic and attainable immediate action and five-year activity program for our organization. The highlights of their report can be summarized as follows:

(1) Organization/Operations:

They suggested that the boundaries establishing the designated Business Improvement Area were too confining and should be enlarged to include all of what has been traditionally considered as the C.B.D. Further, they felt that the legislated budget limitation of \$50,000 was inadequate to provide sufficient funding to carry out an expanded activities program, and they recommended that this be expanded to \$100,000. To assure the orderly development of a program and the ultimate responsibility to see that it was successfully carried out, the consultants strongly suggested that we hire the services of permanent staff.

(2) Short-Term Program:

The consultants suggested that we consider a project that would provide the organization with exposure both among our members and with the public. To this end, they recommended that we undertake a demonstration project, rebuilding the sidewalks around one city block using decorative material, providing planted areas and generally improving the amenities for the pedestrian. They also recommended that we give consideration to, and study the feasibility of, building a parking garage in the valley area behind the main business blocks, as well as the development of a directional signage program for city streets. They further suggested that a

promotion activity package be developed, making certain recommendations in this area.

(3) Long-Term Program:

The report makes mention of the need to establish the mechanics for the regular review and evaluation of the progress undertaken and makes suggestions on how this can be accomplished. The consultants suggested that the role to be played by our organization in the preparation of a C.B.D. plan and how this too might be accomplished. They further made recommendations on our involvement in a beautifications program for the rehabilitation of existing buildings as well as a package delivery service that might be provided with the building of a parking structure.

What has happened since the publication of that report? I can indicate to you the following action which has directly resulted from the consultants' report. In the area of organization/operations, in December of 1974, we hired our first Executive Director who started his position on January 1st 1975. We have enlarged our boundaries so that our membership now totals about 500, and we have been successful in raising the legislated limits of our financing to \$100,000.

In the recommended Short-Term Program, we have completed the design and have received all approvals for the construction of Phase 1 of our Demonstration Block Project. This project was designed for us on a contract basis by the same consulting firm in its continuing involvement in the operation of our organization. Although it is not in the location suggested in the report, City Council has just completed the building of a new parking structure on an existing city parking lot. This garage has increased the capacity of that site by almost 400 cars to 550 cars.

To assist the activities of our Promotion Committee, an advertising agency of Hamilton has completed last year a

Marketing Plan for us, whose objective is to attract an increasing number of people to shop and use the services provided in the C.B.D. One of their first efforts was directed to helping us establish an identity. The Marketing Plan is three-phased, including--using their terminology--near-term, middle-term and long-term plans. Priorities are presently being established by our Promotions Committee on the recommendations made in the plan, and as funds are available, the components will be implemented. The latest project of the Committee has been a free parking stamp promotion in conjunction with the opening of the new parking garage.

The street signage program was undertaken, designed and erected by the Regional Municipality of Niagara. The successful completion of this particular program can be directly related to the excellent liaison that has been established between our Executive Director and the other levels of local governments including both City and Regional staff.

In our Long-Term Program, two specific elements have been dealt with by the Board of Management. The Board has determined that a five-year activity program is not workable; the period has been shortened to three years. At a recent meeting, the Board and Chairmen of all committees reviewed and evaluated our program for the last year. The results of that meeting will be used by our Executive Director to prepare his recommendations on an updated three-year plan which will be considered by the Board when they are finalizing next year's program and budget. Using this method, we hope always to have some guidelines prepared to help us as we consider each year's program. Using the recommendations made in one of our consultants' reports, we have just adopted a Core Area Concept Plan which we will be presenting to City Council shortly as our view on how we see our C.B.D. developing in the future. We are hopeful that this will be the catalyst

to encourage City Council to complete and officially adopt its C.B.D. plan.

Finally, I would like to make a comment regarding communications. Realizing the need to inform both the members and the public about what our City Core organization is all about, our Executive Director has been taking a most active role. With the help of our Communications Committee, regular newsletters have been circulated to all members. This is important and must be done regularly and in an interesting manner. But even more, our Director has been able to establish an excellent relationship with the media to the point where whenever there is an item of public interest related to our endeavours, he is always consulted, thereby assuring that the views of our organization are always fairly expressed.



# 10

LUNCHEON ADDRESS BY THE  
HONOURABLE JOHN R. RHODES,  
MINISTER OF HOUSING, TO THE  
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA  
WORKSHOP, HOTEL TORONTO,  
TUESDAY, JUNE 29, 1976





**10. Luncheon Address by The Honourable John R. Rhodes, Minister of Housing, to The Business Improvement Area Workshop, Hotel Toronto, Tuesday, June 29, 1976**

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a very real pleasure for me to have been invited here this afternoon and to have this opportunity of discussing with you downtown improvement programs.

I am particularly pleased to be at this conference because I view the preservation and revitalization of the core area of our towns and cities as one of the most important social objectives we have over the next few years.

The downtown area is the heart of every community. It expresses in very real terms the character and history of the people who live in the community, and at the same time, indicates the financial stability and civic pride of the businessmen and merchants who work in the central core.

And that is why I am particularly pleased to see a very large representation here today from local Chambers of Commerce and small businessmen's associations.

Because, while governments may assist and sometimes be partners in such programs, I am one who believes that in the long run the initiative and final responsibility in this connection should remain at the local level and with community minded people.

Thinking about today's subject I could not help but to remember the final scene from the movie "The Last Picture Show".

Most of you may recall that in the movie when the town's only theatre closed, it marked the end of the life of that community.

But the event itself only served to confirm what was already underway for a long time--the decay of the central core--and from it spreading out to the whole area a remorse which weakened both the financial and social fibre and initiative of the people themselves.

While the circumstances in the movie may not relate exactly to other places, it is--well let's be blunt--shocking, to see the central areas of many of our own towns and villages at an advanced state of dilapidation, if not outright decay.

I know it is argued by some that if large financial assistance from the senior levels of government were made available, such situations would probably not occur.

But quite honestly, money is not the only answer or solution.

Civic pride and community responsibility can be just as important and these are things which simply cannot be bought by a few grants from Queen's Park or Ottawa.

Over the last few years, perhaps marked by the Canadian Centennial in 1967, there has been a growing interest in Canada's past.

In Ontario, this has been expressed through the reconstruction and renovation of many historic sites, and the preservation of some of the older residential and commercial areas in our larger cities.

But these by themselves do not represent the culture or heritage of our province. Mostly, the history of Ontario is found away from the big cities and out among the quainter, smaller

cities, towns and villages which still retain much of the character and way of life that gave the province its roots.

It is this part of Ontario that many people are now trying to discover again.

So it would seem to me that while places like Toronto and Hamilton are building large and interesting attractions in their downtown cores to attract visitors and business, the smaller centres to a degree have already a built-in attraction--history.

But history in a dilapidated condition is not very good business--in a renovated main street it could mean money in the bank and a thriving future for the community.

I suppose the best example of what I am speaking about is Niagara-on-the-Lake and other towns such as Port Hope.

Nevertheless, Mr. Chairman, during the past quarter of a century, there has been a trend towards consolidating government power and political authority at the provincial and federal levels.

Yet, despite the common theory that the senior levels of government were best equipped to overcome all of the economic and social problems that changing conditions brought upon us during this period, we are now realizing more than ever that instead of being the great fixers, senior governments can be part of the problems themselves.

And so we as a province are now reassessing the relationship between the various levels of government, and even more important, the relationship between government and the community.

In this regard, I am firmly of the opinion that a conference such as this can be so valuable.

This meeting represents a very sensible approach by those who are elected to govern and those other people in the community who want a bigger share in the decisions that affect their neighbourhoods, their businesses, and their livelihood.

Without meaning to be partisan, I must say that there are still many--and we have a lot of them in the Ontario Legislature--who believe more and bigger government is a simple answer to today's many challenges. But my own view, and the view of the present government is one which reflects the new attitude--that an increased sharing of responsibility and co-operation is a better and more realistic approach in the development of our province in the years to come.

And if this leads to a shift away from senior government, so much the better.

That is not to say the Province will sidestep its ultimate responsibility for overall provincial policy, but if local citizens as are represented here today are to be really involved, then this new opportunity for growing participation must be shown not only in words but in action and in deeds.

Obviously, your attendance here today is testimony of your intentions--but the results can only be measured in the projects undertaken and completed back in your own communities.

As one having some experience in local government, I was often puzzled and somewhat disappointed at the lack of a coherent and well-thought-out policy emanating from local businessmen. In such vital areas as shopping plaza construction, off-street parking, and the preservation of the historic core area, business representation was often not as convincing as those who were in opposition to the downtown merchants.

Last week many of you may have read the Premier's remarks urging small businessmen to get organized and to bring to the

provincial level collective representation from the small business community.

There may be a message here also for the small business community to undertake a better organized approach when dealing with their own local councils.

In a few minutes I will be outlining some of the Province's plans in the area of downtown improvement, and while I believe the Province's programs will be of great help, they will mean a lot less if there is not a conscientious, determined, and co-operative effort from municipal councils and the business community.

In many instances, we find that municipal government and the downtown businessmen end up being adversaries. This is indeed unfortunate because instead of the adversary position, what should be sought is real co-operative efforts to preserve and restore the vitality and character and the necessity of the downtown core.

It is towards that objective that this conference has been organized.

This province-wide forum today should help us become more familiar with community renewal problems and suggest how these may be tackled through the business improvement area concept as enabled under Section 361 of The Municipal Act.

It also marks the beginning of a conscious attempt at solving the downtown core problems of our small and medium-size communities, of which there are hundreds across the province.

Since amendments to The Municipal Act in late 1969, Section 361 has been available for concerned merchants to establish an organization for upgrading retail districts. This organization, with the support of local council, can function on an ongoing basis with an annual budget.

Such ongoing beautification and promotion work can stop deterioration and decline in downtown shopping areas.



In addition, the "self-help" aspect of the business improvement area concept makes clear to the community that the downtown businessman is committed to improvement of the downtown area, an important factor in bringing cooperation from all sections of the community.

For twenty years now, the Province of Ontario has provided assistance to municipalities in revitalizing and conserving urban areas, most notably between 1964 and 1968 when the federal urban renewal program was active.

Provincial legislation under the Planning Act has also assisted some municipalities to assemble land for renewal purposes, as in the Peterborough Square project and the Sarnia Seaway Centre Development.

Further provincial legislation has also been used, through zoning orders, to restrict commercial developments on the fringe of urban areas. This has benefited many downtown core areas in ensuring that such developments only proceed after the necessary planning and financial studies have confirmed their appropriateness.

In recent years, provincial renewal funding has been concentrated on residential areas. In 1973 the federal government introduced the neighbourhood improvement program for low and moderate income groups. Ontario was among the first to join in the program which is currently operating in some 45 municipalities.

In 1974, the Province of Ontario introduced a program of home renewal. This, undoubtedly, has been one of the most successful programs ever directed toward rehabilitating and preserving our urban residential fabric. At the moment, there are over 380 municipalities participating in this program, offering loans and grants to low income home owners to repair their sub-standard properties.

For 1976, the Province will be spending some 23 million dollars for community renewal. This funding varies in direction as needs require. At present, it is directed toward the preservation of housing stock and residential areas.

There are, however, other directions towards which this kind of investment can, and will be directed. During 1976, the provincial government will initiate a downtown revitalization program to assist Ontario municipalities in undertaking certain downtown renewal projects.

This new program will, of necessity, be limited in scale for several reasons.

For one thing, the problems of many municipalities can be capably dealt with through the effective and planned use of existing resources, such as the business improvement area concept in conjunction with ongoing municipal capital and maintenance projects.

Another reason is that some of the largest municipalities in Ontario have had the benefit of large scale and significant funded projects in their downtown core through the former urban renewal program, such as Lloyd D. Jackson Square in Hamilton, Borgia Street in Sudbury, International Bridge Plaza and Riverfront Projects in Sault Ste. Marie.

Finally, our experience from the 1964-1968 program has proven to us that some smaller and medium sized municipalities are in need of very selected and strategic funding for key small projects in their downtown areas. These "seeding" developments would have a cause and effect relationship in attracting additional renewal efforts by the private sector in these downtown areas.

At this point, I would now like to very briefly outline some of the highlights of this new Ontario downtown revitalization program.

Our main objectives in this program are:

One--to revitalize portions of core areas in smaller and medium sized Ontario communities with a population below 125,000 by providing limited provincial funding at favourable terms, where the need for such assistance can be justified.

Two--to finance specific "seeding" or "multiplier" projects of downtown plans which will stimulate completion of the plan.

Three--to encourage ongoing maintenance and investment within those downtown cores, as well as the renewal of obsolete land uses.

The provincial assistance we will make available in attaining these objectives will take the form of partially recoverable loans, for two thirds of the approved cost of a number of projects. These would include the acquisition and/or clearance of land for a key revenue-producing development; the installation of an open or covered mall or semi-mall; the improvement of ancillary municipal services and design plans for facade improvement in accordance with approved plans.

There will also be below-market loans to municipalities for the rehabilitation of a key revenue-producing anchor building.

As you can see, the downtown revitalization program does not provide open-ended funding. It does not consist of "give-aways" but it does provide for framework investment in the public interest. Very selective use will be made of these limited provincial funds during the next four years.

To take advantage of the downtown revitalization program, a municipality will have to meet certain requirements. It will have to make a strong commitment to the downtown core. It will have to develop a plan, in concert with its official plan, to follow through on this commitment. And it will have to identify

the key "seeding" or "multiplier" projects in the plan which require and qualify for provincial financial assistance.

Administrative details of this program are currently being developed by a committee appointed from ministry staff and from members of the municipal liaison committee. Full details on eligibility, procedures and conditions will be available by the end of August this year.

To people such as you, with your knowledge and experience, it must be obvious that this program alone will not solve all downtown problems. It is, however, a beginning. If successful, it will be continued. Much depends upon what you take away from gatherings such as this one today, and the success you have in encouraging action back in your own communities.

And so I hope that the discussion we have had here today and the information exchanged will be of real value and not just an exercise in futility.

In any event, as a provincial government, we recognize the concern for downtown development. Not just for a healthy "Main Street" financial community, all important as they may be, but committed as well, as this new program illustrates, to maintaining, as I have mentioned earlier, the downtown core for reasons that may even surpass the income denominators and financial rewards.





















